VOLUME 1 SEPTEMBER 98 ISSUE 5

NEW AGE GAMING SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA'S OWN PC AND PLAYSTATION GAMING MAGAZINE

ARCHIVES
The History of Gaming

THE X FILES GAME

An Unexplained PC Event - Top Secret Review

COMMAND & CONQUER TIBERIAN SUN

PREVIEW

The King of Strategy ?

Environmental Audio™ by CREATIVE

Sound BLASTER Live!

So Real It Has To Be LIVE!

MEGA REVIEWS
- 10 PC
- 10 PlayStation
- Budget Titles

HEART OF DARKNESS

An Epic Adventure Game

HOT REVIEW

Battletech goes Strategy

FULL REVIEW

MECH COMMANDER

South Africa R11.95

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ED's Note

Hello Gamers

Its been an interesting month and a dismal one if you take the performance of the games we had this month. Only Heart of Darkness showed any sign of turmoil in the office and therefore was the only game to earn the coveted NAG Award of Excellence. But it must be said that a constant level was kept by the remainder of the games with MechCommander joining the select few NAG Award of Merit holders.

Making up for the disappointment of the games we are happy to review one of the finest products to come out of Creative Labs, the Sound Blaster Live! The team were so impressed with the abilities of the card that I've been petitioned to buy one for every machine in the office, good try guys, perhaps if you each take a 30% decline in salary we can talk.

I've been getting plenty of mail with gripes about where NAG's loyalties lie, PC or PlayStation. It must firstly be said that NAG's loyalties don't lie with either platform, but with the gamers in South Africa. If a platform gives the gamer the value for money that it should then it deserves to be given the exposure in any magazine. If the Sega's Dreamcast happens to make an appearance in the South African market then you can be sure that NAG will cover the console in its entirety. This is our pledge to support the gamer of this country who have been neglected over the years. But firstly we need to see that local distributors are out there supporting their products and giving something back to the dedicated gamers who sits square eyed for hours on end with their favourite games.

Another question that comes up quite often is the disapproval of there being more PC reviews than PlayStation. Somehow I get the feeling that we are causing a tug-of-war effect that is uncalled for. We tend to forget that all platforms might become cross compatible and we should see some evidence with the next generation Sega and Sony consoles. Unfortunately for PlayStation readers of our magazine it does look as if NAG favours the PC, but this cannot be further from the truth. We review every products on both platforms and quite frankly the support for the PlayStation games has come in drip and drabs. The PC has been around for many more years than the PSX and therefore has a strong distribution infrastructure, giving us access to the products quicker and more timeously. Only since NAG has been on the shelves have we started to see concerted efforts by the PlayStation suppliers to bring the products to the public. South Africans have had to grey purchase and import their own games because of the delays that had plagued our industry. It is still not totally cured but with Ster Kinekor Interactive growing in stature and ability everyday, we can be sure to find the availability of PSX games to become consistent. We fight everyday for more titles on both platforms but we as South African are aware that our market is small and uninviting for overseas investments, therefore it is up to us to keep the games coming in.

On a lighter note I would like to congratulate Alex (Raven) on his Starcraft victory and welcome him to the NAG Strategy Reviewers Team. He has given his first insight with MechCommander, so check it out on page7. We have also acquired the expertise of Nick from LH Industries who dedicates his life to music and the PlayStation. There is also a new Archives section aimed at providing information on the history of gaming and the welcome return of Electronic Hideaway, The Web and Multiplayer Mayhem.

Finally I would like to compliments Sierra on a fine product in Caesar 3 (I only have the demo, but I've finished it 4 times). I am waiting in anticipation for its release, I hope all you gamers out there have a game booked for their Christmas stockings. 'Did I say Christmas' - where has the year gone. Until next month, GAME AWAY.

The Ed

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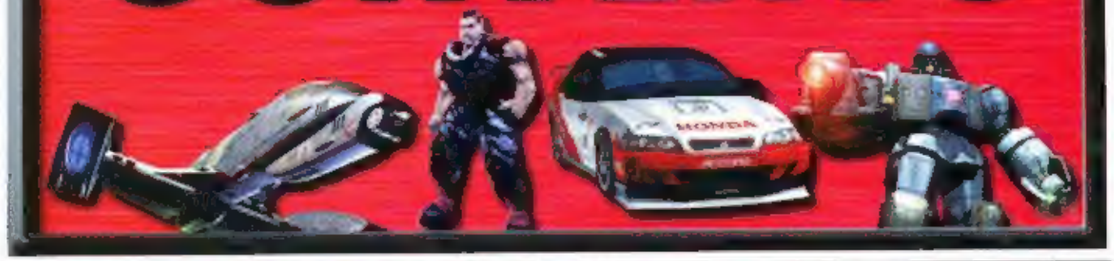


REVIEWS
Under Fire

Preview
Under Construction

HARDWARE HYPE

DEPARTMENTS

The Web

www.avault.com
Arguably the best PC gaming site on the internet. Here you will find everything your heart desires, previews, reviews, cheats and downloads. The best feature of Avault is their up to date news and most of the time if you refresh the page after reading an article updated news items will already have been added.

www.gamespot.com
This is one huge site, unfortunately it is cumbersome to navigate and most of the time visitors will opt to use the search engine to find what they are looking for, instead of going through the bazillion clicks to get to where they want to be. That being said, Gamespot is only second to Avault in news and reviews.

www.gamesdomain.js.co.za
NAGs favourite download site. It may not have the most up to date information, but the fact that it is on local bandwidth counts a lot, especially with the size of demos these days. GamesDomain is a direct mirror of www.gamesdomain.com and is usually about 48 hours behind its international big brother. Simply the best site for downloading demos and patches in South Africa.

www.gamesmania.com
As is usual there are sections for reviews, previews, news and general gaming articles. What makes the site interesting is their excellent editorials covering questions on most gamers minds.

www.gamers.com
The authoritative site for PC game guides including the Tomb Raider and Quake II bible written in conjunction with American champ Thresh. He also has his daily column on this site where you can read about happenings in his gaming career as well as his opinions on certain newsworthy items. Gamers will find the message boards useful for communicating with other gamers around the globe on gaming strategies and issues.

NAG Top 5 PlayStation & PC Internet Sites

PC FAVOURITE WEBSITES

www.videogames.com
This console half of Gamespot has reviews on almost every title released so far and features user reviews in addition to the regular journalistic review, making it a great site for getting second opinions fast. Unfortunately the site centers on console gaming and not just the PlayStation, meaning you have to sift through all the other console items to find PlayStation ones. Gamespot is unique in its comprehensive editorials and widespread coverage of the console gaming community in general and offers feedback via letters and even offer gaming guides for top-notch games.

PLAYSTATION FAVOURITE WEBSITES

www.consoledomain.com
The console half of Games Domain. This site is not entirely dedicated to the PlayStation and has sections for other consoles as well. It is however a good site for honest reviews and tons of cheats.

www.psnation.com
Another up to date PlayStation site with current news, reviews, and previews. For all you code and cheat junkies out there, this is the place to be. The cheats section is one of the most up-to-date found on the Internet with updates almost on a daily basis.

www.playstationfan.com
The PlayStation site for the discriminating PlayStation gamer. The site offers more news than the official Sony PlayStation site and this is its main attraction. PlayStation fan also have reviews on both games and hardware, although the selection of games aren't nearly as comprehensive as some of the other gaming sites. PlayStation fan also offers a service in conjunction with the Amazon Internet bookstore where you can search for code-books, strategy guides and other gaming related books.

www.playstation.com
The official Sony PlayStation site, need I say more? From the main page you can choose to go to any of the regional sites. We fall under Europe although I prefer the American site with its spiffy interface. There are a lot of official game pages hosted on Sony's site making it the best place to find specs on Sony produced games. Of course there is also the PlayStation Underground that provides sneak peeks and insider info on the PlayStation community, as well as an Online Store for purchasing PlayStation goodies, if your willing to pay the price.

WIN WIN WIN

NEW AGE GAMING

COMPETITION

CREATIVE

With the release of the amazing SBLive! from Creative Labs, we have joined forces to bring you some amazing prizes for this month which include:

1 x Graphic Blaster Extreme 8MG
2 x Creative Cobra Gamepads
5 x Ghost in the Shell Soundtracks

1) What is the name of the new sound card from Creative Labs?
2) What is the name of the sound processor found on the new sound card from Creative?

Send your answer on a postcard to
Creative Labs / NAG Competition
PO Box 2749, Alberton, 1449
or E-Mail the answer to comp@nag.co.za

E-Mail:
topten@nag.co.za
Postal:
TOPTEN
PO Box 2749
Alberton, 1449.

10 TOP GAMES

Hi Gamers, another month has gone by and we are still waiting for the highly anticipated titles that should rock our charts. We can expect a hot October and thereafter a big run into December for quality games.

Until then we have very little movement on the charts, especially in the top four positions which are holding steady on both the PC and PlayStation. World Cup 98 was holding the top spot on PC until a strong surge from the public came in and reaffirmed Starcraft as the best game in the SA market. This is in alignment with the overseas market as Starcraft has been holding the world charts for 16 weeks.

Strong support has come in after the review on Commando's and it punches in high at no.5. Likewise with Eidos' Final Fantasy 7 on PC which has a large PlayStation following in the country and this has flowed over to the PC.

The racing genre is back in the flow and the lovers of the Need for Speed range seem quite happy with the efforts of Electronic Arts and it slides into no.5 position.

A strange yet common sight fills the no.6 slot on the PSX, Grand Theft Auto shows signs of entertaining gamers, must be the hijacking's. Another game with violent inclinations is Vigilante 8 from Activision and it is also a new entry into this months charts.

After slipping out the charts last month the humouristic Abe's find his way back at no.8. The longest standing PSX game, Tomb Raider 2, somehow hold on at no.9 and with good reason with such entertaining gameplay. Finally TOCA Touring Car skids down to no.10 with a showing on both charts. Let the games begin!!

LM = Position Last Month TM = Total Months on chart

PC

	NAME	LM	TM
1.	Starcraft	1	4
2.	World Cup 98	2	2
3.	Unreal	3	2
4.	Age of Empires	4	5
5.	Commando's	new	new
6.	Carmageddon	9	1
7.	Final Fantasy 7	new	new
8.	MS Flight Sim 98	10	1
9.	TOCA Touring Car	7	5
10.	Quake 2	6	5

PLAYSTATION

	NAME	LM	TM
1.	World Cup 98	1	2
2.	Gran Turismo	2	4
3.	Resident Evil 2	3	4
4.	Final Fantasy 7	4	5
5.	Need for Speed 3	9	1
6.	Grand Theft Auto	new	new
7.	Vigilante 8	new	new
8.	Abes Oddysee	new	new
9.	Tomb Raider 2	7	5
10.	TOCA Touring Car	6	2

Electronic Arts To Command & Conquer Westwood Studios In Deal Worth R196 Million

The acquisition that will take the form of a cash transaction is valued at $122.5 million. The deal is subject to customary conditions, but is expected to be concluded by the end of September. Best known for the game Command and Conquer which sold 12 000-odd units in South Africa, Westwood Studios is part of Virgin Interactive Entertainment which is a division of the Spelling Entertainment Group.

Electronic Arts (EA) is a major interactive entertainment software company with development operations in nine countries and has international subsidiaries and distribution facilities in 75 world-wide. It posted revenues of $909 million for fiscal 1998 (ending 31 March 1998), drawn from sales of its numerous titles that are developed for PCs and advanced entertainment systems such as PlayStation and Nintendo. It markets its products under six brand names: Electronic Arts, EA Sports, Maxis, Origin Systems, Bullfrog Productions and Jane's Combat Simulations.

Based on 1997 calendar year revenues of $848 million, Electronic Arts was rated the number one home interactive software provider world-wide, according to an independent study conducted by Access Media International, a US-based research firm.

EA Africa, which was launched in 1990, is well known for the success it has had distributing the EA Sports games FIFA World Cup 98, PGA Tour Golf, NBA Live Basketball and NASCAR Racing as well as for the Tomb Raider game which the local operation licenses from Eidos Interactive.

Peter Lacey, MD of Electronic Arts Africa, shows off the highly anticipated Tiberian Sun from the newly acquired Westwood Studios.

Peter Lacey, MD of EA Africa is delighted about the acquisition: "EA has traditionally been very strong in sports and action products and simulations. We recognised that we had a weakness in the real-time strategy game slot. The acquisition of Westwood not only removes that weakness, but also gives us the top-selling strategy game in the industry: Command and Conquer."

Command and Conquer and the other Westwood titles are presently distributed in South Africa by Multimedia Warehouse. Under the terms of the acquisition, current distribution agreements become null and void once the transaction is formalised. New Westwood releases, Dune 2000 for PC and Command and Conquer Retaliation for PlayStation, will be sold under a distribution agreement by Electronic Arts Africa. The expected release dates for both these products is mid-September. Electronic Arts Africa will then also distribute all existing and future Westwood titles.

Command and Conquer has been one of the most successful PC games ever. Other Westwood titles, developed for both PC and Macintosh platforms, as well as for next-generation consoles, include Lands of Lore, Dune, Monopoly for the Internet, Blade Runner and the Kyrandia adventure trilogy. Lacey estimates that the acquisition just of the pure licensing for Command and Conquer will add about 10% to EA Africa's revenues. He states that EA is committed to retaining the Westwood brand name; it will thus become the seventh brand name in the EA stable.

According to Brett Sperry, Westwood's president and CEO, the company selected EA because of the infrastructure and support that it provided Westwood to enable it to continue building great games. EA's president of Worldwide Studios, Don Mattrick, states: "Westwood is one of the most respected studios in the world, with an impressive portfolio of best-selling franchises and brilliant creative talent. Their strong PC product line will allow us to provide an even broader array of high quality products to our customers."

Both the Westwood founders, Brett Sperry and Louis Castle, have signed five-year employment contracts with EA.

Larry Probst, chairman and CEO of EA, adds: "This partnership combines one of the industry's top game development studios with EA's unmatched world-wide sales, marketing and distribution capabilities. We believe the addition of the Westwood product line and development teams will help us to achieve our goal to be the No. 1 publisher of entertainment software for the PC."

Top-selling Electronic Arts game titles in South Africa for the period June 1997 to June 1998

1. World Cup '98 - 13,000 units
2. Need for Speed II - 12,500 units
3. Tomb Raider II - 12,500 units
4. Riven - 5,500 units
5. Road to the World Cup -5,500 units

Source: EA Africa, based on actual sales

John Romero Dies And Gets Resurrected All In One Day

On the 28th of August www.avault.com ran a story reporting that John Romero was supposedly dead. The story came about when a picture of John, that was taken for the Texas Monthly Magazine, made its way onto the Internet, add to this that someone actually called the Dallas PD and heard that John Romero got shot and you got a news scoop. Even Ion Storm couldn't deny or confirm the report since they were out of contact with John for a while.

Quakers rejoice 'da man' is still alive and kicking although probably a little shaken up by his exaggerated death. According to John he spoke to the reporter who wrote the story and he himself would have ran it given the sources where the information came from. Avault retracted its report and made the appropriate corrections after they spoke to John himself, and in his words "... for all of you who really did care and got upset: I love you all!"

Omnikron Delayed

Eidos Interactive has announced that the highly anticipated title Omnikron will not ship this year November as expected but will be delayed until 1999. This will give the developer, Quantic Dreams, more time to fine-tune the game for PSX to the best they possibly can. There are also rumours that a famous international musician might get involved with Omnikron. The expected announcement for this rumour might come as soon as September.

FREE Wing Commander Mission At Secret Ops

Origin Systems announced that www.secretops.com has gone live. This site hosts Wing Commander: Secret Ops a sequel to Wing Commander: Prophecy that will continue the thrilling story of this highly acclaimed game. It is available exclusively via the Internet for free and Origin will release the 56 new missions over a seven-week period.

That is the good news, now for the bad news. The initial download for Secret Ops is a whopping 185 MB and will take 11 hours to download over a 28.8 modem running at its full bandwidth. 're right! We here in SA rarely run at full bandwidth so you can add a couple more hours to the download. Fortunately Origin has split the game into two parts, one is the necessary starting kit without speech coming in at 65 MB and then the optional speech pack measuring 54 MB. Still a hefty download even without speech, but a gamer has to do what a gamer has to do. Missions 2 - 7 will also be around 1 MB each. Now I really have to start downloading if I want to play this week.

NOTE: Gamers that download the files before the 28th of August take note that the files were infected with the CIH Virus. The CIH Virus can overwrite your BIOS and format your hard drive so be careful. Get a virus program as soon as possible and disinfect your files and drives.

Blizzard Responds To WarCraft Petition

For those who do not know yet 'WarCraft Adventures' was cancelled about 3 months ago. Since then WarCraft fans have drawn up a petition to convince Blizzard to continue with this adventure game based in the WarCraft universe.

Blizzard responded by thanking everyone who signed the petition and informed the community that they still wouldn't continue with the game.

According to Blizzard - "The decision centered around the level of value that we want to give our customers. In essence, it was a case of stepping up and really proving to ourselves and gamers that we will not sell out on the quality of out games."

"And finally, we hope that Warcraft fans will consider our track record and trust our judgement on ending the project. The cancellation of Warcraft Adventures does not signal the demise of Azeroth. We have every intention of returning to the Warcraft world because there are still chapters to be told. We will keep you informed as we announce future Warcraft plans."

WarCraft fans are saddened by this news but we will look forward to what Blizzard have up their sleeve for the WarCraft universe.

Cricket World Cup '99 Announced

Electronic Arts announced Cricket World Cup '99 will be available next year during the biggest Cricket event in the world, the World Cup tournament. This sequel will keep virtual batsman happy while they immerse into a game where the aim is the gold cup and realism is the order of the day.

Electronic Arts has also contracted Richie Benaud and David Gower to supply the in game commentary for all the fans. EA Sports promises to put you in the World Cup event in a way that has never been possible before, with the exclusive Official Game of Cricket World Cup '99. The game will be released for the PlayStation and Windows platforms.

EWC '99 will feature:

Up to date information from the Cricket scene

Incredibly accurate physics

3D motion captured graphics. Over 550 movements were captured using England One-Day Captain Adam Hollioake and his brother and teammate Ben Hollioake.

Accurately modelled weather and pitch conditions.

In depth strategy mode allowing detailed team management and tactics

Network play over a LAN and head-to-head challenges over a modem

With the success Cricket '97 had in South Africa, Cricket Word Cup '99 is sure to be a winner.

WarGames Ships With Marburg Virus

MGM Interactive announced that their game WarGames shipped with the Marburg virus, which is contained in the electronic registration program. Fortunately for us South Africans the problem only occurred in the American version of the game, we received the European version, where they picked up the problem before actually releasing the game to production.

The Marburg virus infects Windows 95 and 98 and is one of the first polymorphic viruses made for the Windows platform.

Polymorphic viruses change their code every time a file is infected using encryption algorithms making it more difficult for anti-virus software to detect and disinfect them. The Marburg virus strikes 3 months after the initial infection and will display the standard windows error icon all over the screen, making your monitor look like it has measles. The virus also has the ability to overwrite your BIOS which will make your computer unbootable.

Regrettably we do have grey market operators in South Africa who bring product in via the States instead of going through the local distributors. If you bought a PC version of WarGames make sure that it has the Electronic Arts Africa sticker on it or has a Electronic Arts Africa registration card, otherwise you might be sitting with a grey market product and should be weary of the virus. If you have a copy with the virus, visit www.mgminteractive.com for information on disinfection.

Electronic Arts Africa have notified New Age Gaming that they will not offer any support for versions of the game with a virus on it, due to the fact that it is a grey market product. This serves as a good incentive to support our local distributors.

You Don't Know Jack Coming To PSX

The highly entertaining and award winning 'trivia show' game named You Don't Know Jack from Berkeley Systems Inc. is coming to the PlayStation platform in the near future.
YOU DON'T KNOW JACK will turn any PlayStation into an instant trivia show with more than 1,400 challenging questions, multiplayer action, and features specifically for the PlayStation. Created in partnership with Jellyvision Inc., of Chicago, the title will fall under the Sierra Attractions brand of games when it ships this November in the States.
Hopefully we will see it here in South Africa soon afterwards. The game is truly enjoyable and makes for some hilarious entertainment when played in a group and is currently available for the PC.

Creative Labs Introduces RIVA TNT Card

Creative Labs will introduce a RIVA TNT based accelerator card in September named the Graphics Blaster RIVA TNT. The 2D/3D accelerator solution will be available in a PCI or AGP configuration.
The chipset sports an incredibly fast 2D engine and has been expanded to support 2D resolutions as high as 1900 x 1200 pixels. The RIVA TNT's new dual-pipeline 3D rendering engine has been completely re-engineered to deliver increased performance and quality. Key features and improvements have been added, such as 32-bit colour rendering throughout the 3D pipeline and a 24-bit z-buffer, providing precise visual quality while eliminating banding, texture flickering and other dithering artifacts for the most realistic graphics experience possible.
In addition, the advanced design of the 3D rendering engine allows two pixels to be rendered per clock cycle for incredible fill rate performance and providing advanced multi-texture environmental effects such as single-pass trilinear and anisotropic texture filtering, bump mapping and more.

Diamond Multimedia Annouces Two New Products Coming Soon For Gamers

Diamond Multimedia recently announced two new products in development for the PC.

First there is word of the Monster Sound MX300 which will use the new Vortex+ 2 / A3D 2.0 3D positional audio processor. The new PCI audio card will be the first to make use of the highly regarded Vortex 2 processor and is aimed at the discriminating gamer looking for quality sound. The A3D 2.0 algorithm supported by the Monster Sound MX300 enables PC games to come alive with multi-dimensional sound cues and environmental effects from above, below, behind, in front or from either side of the gamer. Specialised Aureal Wavetracing+ 3D capability renders audio streams to the exact acoustics of a room or environment in real-time, so an enemy's gun blast inside an enclosed room sounds different than a shot fired from two rooms away or in an open battle field. In addition, sound waves sound like they actually reflect off the walls or environmental surfaces in each game scene, whether it's comprised of wood, glass, carpet or even under water, the way they would sound in real-life. The result is a more realistic 3D audio environment.

Diamond's Monster Sound MX300 provides full Dolby Digital support, professional-quality 320-voice wavetable synthesis and audio playback through headphones, two or four speakers; enabling PC gamers to enhance their gaming or DVD experience with a theater-style speaker setup. In addition, Diamond's new sound card is compatible with games developed using DirectSound, DirectSound 3D and derivatives as well as Sound Blaster- Pro compatibility for PC titles that require real-mode DOS support.

Secondly Diamond Multimedia announced the Monster Fusion which a 2D/3D graphics accelerator based on the 3Dfx Banshee chipset. The card is aimed at gamers looking for a combined solution to today's gaming requirements. Both a PCI and AGP version of the Monster Fusion will be available each with 16 Mb of RAM and a 250 Mhz RAMDAC, offering the best of both worlds using a single slot.

For PC gamers who want to play all the most popular PC games, from Unreal to Quake II, without the worry of incompatibility, Diamond's Monster Fusion is fully optimised to handle titles developed with 3Dfx's Glide, Silicon Graphics' OpenGL ICD and Microsoft's Direct3D under DirectX 6.0 APIs. In addition, Monster Fusion works with PCs running under the Windows 95/98 and Windows NT operating systems.
The card sounds truly awesome but will have some stiff competition in the upcoming Savage 3D from S3 and RIVA TNT based accelerators.

New Age Gaming • Price Comparison

	Incredible Connection	CNA Interactive	Business Land	Shop 99	Dions	Pick & Pay Ict
Vigilante 8 (PSX)	R459.00	R429.00	R349.00	R453.00	None	None
Collin McRae (PSX)	None	None	None	R412.00	None	None
Heart Of Darkness (PSX)	None	R449.00	None	R424.00	None	None
Dual Shock Controller (PSX)	R299.00	R399.00	None	R320.00	None	None
The X-Files Game (PC)	R329.00	R359.00	R299.00	R333.00	None	R299.00
Deathtrap Dungeon (PC)	R319.00	None	None	None	None	R319.00
Creative 12MB Voodoo2 (PC)	R2299.00	None	R2399.00	None	None	None
Saitek X-36 Combo (PC)	R999.00	None	None	None	None	None

NAG Editors Choice Goes International

New Age Gaming made it onto the Creative Labs front-page with the "Editor's Choice" that we gave the Sound Blaster Live!, the insert appeared before even went to print for this issue. Ok so were gloating a little, but it is a mile stone for us to have our magazine mentioned on such an esteemed hardware manafacturers site. We would like to thank Creative Labs South Africa for sending our article to Singapore for inclusion on the Sound Blaster Live! site.

Micronics Respond To NAG Review

NAG has received a response from the Financial Director of Micronics via the local distributor, Virtual Media Systems, on our review of the Orchid Righteous 3D II. According to the Director the reason that Diamond bought out Micronics (who were renowned for their motherboard design expertise) was part of a strategic decision to enable Diamond to gain the motherboard expertise it required to enter the medium and low end multimedia computer market, were the technology was moving to increase the functions directly on the motherboard and thereby decrease the cost.
He also stated that the Orchid Righteous 3D II v1.2 drivers have not been updated due to the fact they are very robust and no problems have been reported with them as yet, and that they are compatible with Windows 98.

NAG NEEDS MORE CLASSIFIED ADS

Unfortunately we didn't receive enough classified ads for this issue, but we emplore everyone out there to send in some ads for games or hardware for sale. Clubs and Internet Cafes can also advertise upcoming competitions or events around the country. If we do not get enough responses for the classified section we might be forced to scrap it, so please send in those ads.
This service is only available for personal use and not intended for any Commercial entity to advertise their products. We will not place any such submissions received. Make copy of the below form and fax it to us at 011 869-0462 or email all the relevant information to classifieds@nag.co.za. Please tick the appropriate box for your type of submission and the text for it has to be 30 words or less.

NAG Classifieds

Name: _____ Surname: _____
Tel Home: _____ Work: _____
City: _____ email: _____
☐ Hardware / ☐ Software / ☐ Event Info
☐ Club Info / ☐ Other _____

October International Release List

PC RELEASES

Alien	Intelligence Flatline
Alpha Centauri	Firaxis
Apache Havoc	Empire Interactive
Blood II	Monolith Productions
Caesar III	Sierra Studios
Dark Side of the Moon	SouthPeak Interactive
Dominant Species	Red Storm Entertainment
Don't Touch That Dial	Sierra Attractions
Duel: The Mage Wars	Virgin Interactive
F16 Aggressor	Virgin Interactive
Fallout 2	Black Isle Studios
Grim Fandango	LucasArt
Homeworld	Sierra Studios
Jagged Alliance II	Sirtech Software
Land of Lore III	Westwood Studios
Motoracer 2	Electronic Arts
Need For Speed 3	Electronic Arts
Plazma's Strike Zone	GT Interactive
Pro Pilot 99	Dynamix
Rage of Mages	Nival Entertainment
Red Baron 3D	Dynamix
Settlers III	Blue Byte
Shogo: Mobile Armor Division	Monolith
Sim City 3000	Maxis
Starsiege	Dynamix
Swords and Sorcery	Virgin Interactive
Turok 2: Seeds of Evil	Iguana
Uprising 2	3DO
Vigilance	SegaSoft
War of the Worlds	GT Interactive

PlayStation Releases

Alien Resurrection: The Game	Fox Interactive
Backstreet Billiards	ASCII Entertainment
Big Air	Accolade
Bust-A-Move 4	Natsume
Clock Tower: Ghost Head	ASCII Entertainment
Croc 2	Fox Interactive
Dead in the Water	ASCII Entertainment
Dragonseeds	Jaleco
Elmo's Magical Letter Tour	SCEA
Elmo's Magical Number Tour	SCEA
Global Domination	Psygnosis
Jeopardy	asbro
Metal Gear Solid	Konami
Monster Seed	Sunsoft
Motorhead	Fox Interactive
NBA Tonight	Radical Entertainment
O.D.T.	Psygnosis
R Types	ASCII Entertainment
RC Racing	Fox Interactive
Rugrats	Acclaim
Silhouette Mirage	Working Designs
The Fifth Element	Activision
Thrill Kill	Virgin
Tiny Tune Adventures	NewkidCo
Wheel of Fortune	Hasbro
Wild 9's	Interplay
X Games Pro Boarder	Radical Entertainment

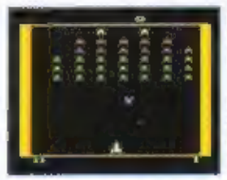
This section will be featured monthly form now on in the Bits & Bytes section and list the international release dates of upcoming games for both platforms. New Age Gaming takes no responsibility for the accuaracy of this information. Any of the release dates may be changed if the developer deems it necessary. The only official shipping date that most developers give these days is "When its done!".

I hope you have enjoyed THIS edition of Bits & Bytes. We hope to hear your opinions and suggestions about how to improve this section. If you have any comments please
E-Mail me at bb@nag.co.za
Leonard Dienner - Assistant Editor

Where it all began?

Haven't you ever wondered how the gaming industry grew to be one of the biggest industries in the world? Wil Granzier A.K.A AtariBaby hops into his time machine and takes us down memory lane.

So you've just spent your entire pay cheque on up grading your PC with the latest 3D card. Now you can play Quake II a gazillion times faster. Well have you ever stopped and thought about how it all started and what gaming was like before artificial intelligence, polygon graphics, 32 bit speech and FMV cut scenes. Although arcade amusement has been around since the early 1940's, most of these machines were mechanical and almost all were shooting games. It was only 30 years later in 1972 that the first commercially successful electronic video game PONG hit the arcades. Pong was a laughably simple tennis simulation played with two paddles on a black and white screen. No sound card needed...boop! Boop!! Boop! It was all there (ooh how exciting). Created by Nolan Bushnell a 21-year-old electronics wizard in his spare time, the obtrusive machine in the big yellow cabinet became excessively popular.



The next few years saw the introduction of numerous Pong like games. There was Quada Pong, Super Pong Race and Breakout. The next step was to release the game in home "entertainment" form. By 1975 over 20 000 "action" packed Pong machines were released to enthusiastic buyers in the USA.

It was this move that inspired Bushnell to find what was probably the worlds first major electronic video game company, ATARI of America. Bushnell made a fortune from Pong and many other inadequate video games such as Breakout and Sprint (one of the first driving games to hit the market). By 1977 Atari had release two more home versions of their popular arcade series, Tank (Combat) and Videopinball. Eventually it all come together with a machine that became the biggest hit ever for Atari, The Atari 2600 video computer system (VCS). There were other machines that were around before the Atari, like the Odessey (1972) manufactured by Magnavox, Phillips sister company in the USA and the Fairchild, Channel F in 1976. But none of these companies were marketing arcade style games like Atari. The best the Odessey could offer was a version of Tic-Tac Toe and the now aging Pong.

A marketing poster portraying Atari's position as market leader of the era.

It also had a feature where you could turn your TV screen into a basic art studio. These 'programs' were selected by jumper switches on the front of the machine and not by inserting separate ROM cartridges. Most of the machines from this era operated on the same principal. To make things even more interesting, their circuits weren't smart enough to electronicly paint the playing field, so the player had to tape a transparent overlay on the TV screen to represent the court.

So the guys at Atari gave their creation 4k memory and made it give the player something no other system could: expandability.

With the release Atari's attention grabbing 2600 VCS, Magnavox made it known that they would be relaunching the Odessey ver 2 into the video game market by end 1978. At the same time a small and relatively unknown Japanese player, Taito, entered the arcade market with the release of the all time classic Space Invaders. It became an instant hit with Invader arcades rising all over Japan. Atari managed to secure the rights to Taito's Invaders, and by the end of 1978 it became the biggest selling game for the VCS. In America Atari was fast becoming the industry leader in videogames. Keen to keep the dosh rolling in Atari expanded into Japan, founding Atari Corp of Japan. The company would be responsible for flogging their hit American games to the apparently dipe - for - the - picking Japanese market. At the time Namco (founded in 1955), then called Nakamura Manufacturing, and Sega were already established companies but neither of the two were involved in the gaming industry in a major way. Namco was making kiddy rides at the time and Sega's main interest lay in pinball machines and jukeboxes.

The Atari 2600 started what is now a Billion Dollar Industry.

Atari's costly Japanese expansion simply didn't reap the expected rewards and the company that single-handedly invented the videogame found themselves going bust, at a rapid rate. The only option was selling the Japanese side of the company. Bids were invited and the bid of $500 000 by Nakamura was more that enough to secure ownership, beating Sega to the draw.

In 1978 Nakamura changed their name to Namco and released a stupid little game called Gee Bee. It was a game very similar to Atari's Space War and was the first game to find its way into the famous 'cocktail' or tabletop machines. Namco's biggest hit came with Galaxian, a Space Invader clone. With aliens that attacked in swarms and flew down towards you! Pathetic though it sounds it was an absolute revelation and was the game that put Namco on the route to success.

While Namco started to dominate the Arcade scene, Atari ensured that the VCS became the world biggest selling home entertainment system by releasing all their arcade hits on the VCS. It was estimated that over 13 million VCS units were sold. (The last version of the 2600 was manufactured in 1991, which made it the longest running videogame console in production, 14 years)

But the Atari Empire had a major flaw, it was a problem that would tarnish the shining image of the worlds biggest selling home entertainment system and with the world's biggest toymaker about to enter the market, the future seemed a bit clouded. Would Atari survive the biggest onslaught yet, and what is that " wocka-wocka" sound?

The answers to these and other burning questions in next months issue until then, hand me my Pong 3D cartridge please.....

AtariBaby

Archives - The Early Years 1972 - 1979

BACKCHAT

PO Box 2749
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letters@nag.co.za

Thank you to everybody who write to. Unfortunately we cannot reply to all of them, nor we do even them all. We now have an e-mail address dedicated to the letters section. The address is stated above. If you utilise the e-mail you are almost guaranteed a reply. Congratulations to Muzaffar Loot who wins a copy of Heart of Darkness. See YA.

Please include your name and postal address with your letter so we can forward your prize should you win. Any winners without the above shall forfeit the prize and the Editor's cupboard will collect another game (Damn not this month :Ed). The prize cannot be changed for cash or any other product. The Editor's decision is final and that's that.

Dear NAG
I just wanted to say keep up the good work on the mag.
Although I have a few suggestions.
1. Get a proofreader.
2. Start a CD.
3. Have more competitions.
4. Review more games.
5. Have a help section for common problems with PC and Playstation.
I was wondering if you could announce my friend Zack as a liar. He claims he has a Sony Dream-Machine, whatever that is and that it runs Quake2 at some insane speed. He also claims that he purchases games off a guy in Kwazulu Natal, because they are not available in the shops. I doubt that Tomb Raider3 is out yet. I therefore await your answer.
Thanks for an excellent mag!

Jarred Holmes
Springs

to Jarred
For your first suggestions we are working on the request and yes I finally fired out dyslexic proofreader. I hope you can see the improvement in this issue.
As for your friend well I think he should stop taking that medication you gave him and join us in the real world, he might start a riot outside the Industry of Trade if he carries on hallucinating.
Ed

Dear NAGs
Firstly I know you have received thousands of compliments for your incredible Gaming Mag, but I'm sure you won't mind another contribution. (NAG KICKS BILL GATE'S ASS!)
Now to the Q & A bit:
1. Will the demo CD you supply be compatible on both PC and Playstation, and will it feature demos for both machines?
2. Have you got a release date for Brain Lara Cricket 98 for the Playstation?
3. Why don't you make your cheats section a four-page pull-out? 2 pages PC and 2 page Playstation. And let the readers send in a couple as well?
4. If it is possible extend your mag to a 100 pages?
Please spare a thought for our dedicated gamers who do not have access to e-mail or Internet. Why don't you print one page e-mail letters and the other page postal letters? One last request, are there any cheats for World Cup 98 on the Playstation?
Thanks for a stunning mag!

Harold Potter
Durban

Hi Harold
The cover CD unfortunately will not cover the PlayStation for reason beyond our control. Even our faithful competition who have strong ties with Sony themselves are battling for PSX CD's. The main problem is because the CD cannot be produced locally and there are very few CD plants that cater for the PSX.
As for Brian Lara Cricket 98, we can expect it within the month if Ster Kinekor are on their toes. This is an unconfirmed timing but its almost ready for shipment.
We are currently taking on cheats from gamers all over SA and are allocating more room for them, this issue has the most cheats of all our issues.
It is possible to extend the mag to 100 pages with ease but due to the price of the mag and support of advertising it is difficult to make ends meet at the moment, especially if we are to keep the quality of paper. Printing prices have recently gone through the roof, but if we continue to sell as well as we have, I can see no choice but to lengthen the magazine.

Stanza 2 of the Poem:

"NAG, NAG I see the same price on your sales tag
Although it's thicker and better
It ain't bad it is just TOTALLY RAD
It's cool but nothing like a fool's tool
Seeing issue FOUR in the store
Made me want to tear and swear
I hope you keep it up NAG my favourite MAG"

From the poet who doesn't know it.
Muzaffar Loot
Estcourt, Kwa-Zulu Natal

Hi Muzaffar
We were impressed with the first poem and even more with the second, we all unanimously agree on giving you letter of the month. But before everybody else goes out and showers us with poems, this is a once off choice because of the originality and effort. To all those that missed out keep on trying. Muzaffar enjoy your prize of Heart of Darkness.
Ed
(ps: PC or PlayStation, we reviewed both)

Dear NAG
Firstly a compliment to you guys (gals) at NAG. Your mag just oozes quality and devotion. At glancing at the price tag, I was sure C.N.A. had made an error. Unbelievable as it was, the price was for real and so was the quality.
The gaming industry has always gone unnoticed taken a back seat to other forms of entertainment, but thanks to people like you that is about to change.
Your review on Resident Evil2 was brilliant to the "T". After playing R.E.2 at night, my nerves were shot every shadow posed a threat. I had uncontrollable urges to just scream and run.
The story line was slightly lacking and the puzzle element was a bit frail but the real enjoyment came from simply blowing that zombies head off or seeing a licker writhe in its last moments of life. I have a few questions / suggestions.
1. How about a review on Parasite Eve?
2. Want some Playstation cheats? I've got a thousand of them.
3. I'd love a centerfold / pull-out in your mag - how about starting with one of Tifa Lockheart!
4. I'm sure we'll all love to see a photo of the NAG team!
Got to go now. Keep up the good work. I've got some serious f%!^#!! to kick in Tekken3. And maybe to end the night off, I'll go on a killing spree in Raccoon City. Who knows, I may even do a little putting before I turn in.

Kennith Anderson
Durban

Hi Kenneth
I totally agree with you and RedTide on the honors of Resident Evil 2, my wife wondered why she was getting so much love and attention, then she bust me playing RE2 and put two an two together. I was sleeping in the spare room for three days, hey we got to play games. The Parasite Eye review will be worked on shortly or as soon as the Distributor happens to finally get a few copies.
We had planned a full frontal centrefold of the Assistant Editor soon but due to lack of interest it was cancelled. We are looking into other offerings. A photo of the NAG team, well if you really want to scare the locals away, OK. Check out the next issue.
Hey, have you taken my copy of Tekken3, I know where you live.
Ed

Greetings All
I recently purchased issue 3 of NAG and I must say that it was really great and I believe in my honest opinion that you guys (and girls) are complete geniuses, to have thought up the idea of the GREAT SOUTH AFRICAN COMPUTER MAGAZINE THAT IS NAG. I was truly captivated by your L3 report back, and your Voodoo2 comparison. Have you set a true date of production for your cover disc?
Are you ever going to get a NAG website and if you are when? I await NAG issue 4 eagerly.
Congratulations once again on your great magazine.

Neil
Alberton

Hi Neil
The wondrous and mysterious cover disk, even I await such a surprise, I cannot put my &%^$ on a block just yet, but I'm pretty sure I heard November. OOoops.
Ed

Dear Beloved NAG

We are gathered here today in holy matrimony, to witness a totally new upcoming magazine that is sure to hit the bestseller charts.
If anyone objects that cool games like Starcraft and Gran Turismo should not be published, speak now, or forever hold your stupid magazine like CGW or PC Gamers Weekly.
Do you fellow reader take this thoroughly cheap South African mag as you're lovely wedded gaming mag, to have and to hold until GAME OVER do you part (you won't be game over with there cheats anyway)? YOU SHOULD DO!
And do you, NAG magazine, always supply your readers with good gaming material? We all know the answer to that one anyway!
I now pronounce you, with the gaming power vested in me, Gamer and Gaming Magazine! That happened to me two weeks ago! And boy did I have a great honeymoon. I'm sure, every one of us should do a thing like that! I can't wait to see what happens next. And may God have mercy on our Playstations!
Just Married

Henry Boardman
Pretoria

Hi Henry
Wow! NAG married and without my consent. What is this world coming to. May you have a long and prosperous life, filled with joy and excitement (not that kind). Keep that Light Gun to yourself dear.
Ed

Hello NAG
Thanks for the best quality magazine on the S.A. market! I am surprised at what quality S.A. can produce at such an excellent price. When I saw the price on the mag I thought someone had swapped the price, so I was sh**ing in my pants when I bought it, hoping a security guard would not catch me!
I must say that your review on Gran Turismo was excellent and that the picture quality was what made my Father purchase Gran Turismo for me. So thanx a lot! I hope you find the cheat code books I sent you useful (sorry if they look scruffy). I would love too subscribe but the postal service in this country will just Hi-Jack it!
Keep up the amazing standards of your mag.
P.S. Please review Formula 1 98 or Fifa 98 so my gullible father will buy them for me.
Cheers.

Nabil Abdool
Sandton

Hi Nabil
Hey, Dad I know you reading this, get your son some games and he'll stop buggin you, or maybe you will end up stealing time on the trusty old PSX.
Thanks for the code books, they managed to come through the postal system relatively unscathed, maybe they are a little to old for theft.
Are you sure you paid R 11.95 for the mag, it sounds as if you might have picked up the Huisgenoot by mistake.
Look out over November for Formula 1 98 from Psygnosis, its gonna rock.
Ed

Dear NAG
I've got a problem. We get told that the price of games is high because of software piracy. I buy between 20 and 40 games a year at +/- R300 each. This means that in total I'm spending between R6000 to R12000 a year. Recently I priced games and they all seem to be in the R350 to R400 price range.
My Point is this:
This is not due to piracy that I have to pay this much. It is due to the Rand / Dollar exchange rate. Also it is because the game distribution network in South Africa is controlled by a few individuals who seem to want to make a quick buck out of the SA gaming public.
Can you blame anyone who has or wants to pirate a game???
Currently I can't say I blame any one who pirates a game. This is getting out of hand. Is there anything we as the gaming public can do to force gaming prices lower? This way nobody has to pirate it to play it.

Corné Du Preez
Weltevredenpark

Hey Corné
We at NAG share your frustration as well as the main part of the gaming fraternity. You may think I sound bribed but the true money is made abroad and not with our local distributors. Since my adventure to the States it became vividly clear as to why we are paying so much money for our games. Firstly, you are right about the exchange rate, but the key factor is the negotiation between the local and overseas distributor. Normally a good price is originally negotiated, but as the Rand devalues, so does the price of the products. The overseas distributor is then not willing to drop his prices and our guys end up taking the fall. Remember that there is a middle man now in SA and that shunts the values up a notch. The only local distributor not to be restrained by the middleman syndrome is Electronic Arts Africa, but then only with EA product. They still have to negotiate with there non-affiliated titles such as Interplay, Psygnosis etc. I have personally seen the figures and can say that our distributors take big knocks and losses on products because of the lack of support of the SA gaming community. This then in turn creates price increases so that they can recuperate lost revenues in order to pay salaries at the end of the day. Don't get me wrong, there is still a lot that must be done by the Distributors to help the man on the street maintain his passion for gaming without him having to pirate games. Lets not judge them to harshly. I don't see anybody else standing up and willing to invest millions in licenses. If there is one way we can help, it would be a concerted effort to support the good titles on the market. Look at the best selling games and what we as a country provide in ways of units:
World Cup 98 - 13500 units (SA)
World Cup 98 - over 1 million (US)
We need to show that our market is worth of the price adjustments before the Distributors such as Activision, SquareSoft etc. can justify a price drop for us lowly followers.
After that mouthful, thanks for the support and enjoy the rest of the mag
Ed

Hi NAG
Holy smoke! Who is driving that crystal ball of yours? I mean it is freaky.
Let me put you in the picture. At the beginning of this month I was getting a little cranky waiting for my magazine an so I sent a very clear and specific (some people would even call it pushy) E-mail to
the editor stating my disappointment and imminent psychological breakdown and for good measure I threw in a few demands, the usual stuff you know, nothing fancy just a few games I wanted reviewed etc.
Imagine my surprise when two days later the mag hits the local CNA with almost all of my humble (and not so humble) requests. My prayers have been answered.
Now I ask you how the hell did that happen? Only one thing I can think of and that's precognition! You guys are employing a fortune-teller! Well either that or you are absolutely in tune with the gaming community in SA.
Personally I'm sticking with the crystal ball theory.
Thanks guys, you really made my day with this issue and I hope to see the website up and running soon.
This is just a thought but you guys might want to do an article and give me your insights on the phenomenon of the adventure game being a dying breed. Every second mag is saying 3d killed the adventure game. To me as a great fan of adventure games (as well as 3d shooters) this seems tragic. What do you guys think?
With all the money being pumped into the X-files adventure games is there still a future for us Space Quest 1 fans or will Quake and Unreal blow these games out of contention forever?
Come on lads you can do it, look into the ball...
See Ya

Thys van Zyl

Hi Thys
Our fortune Teller was on leave (these damn unions) when the first few issues went out, but thankfully our investments in sending her to the Fortune Tellers College of Supreme Sight has finally paid off. I have relayed your message on to her via telepathy and should be receiving a reply if she hasn't switched off her hearing aid.
As for the article on the supposed death of adventure games, it sounds like a fantastic idea but it may contrast with our reviews that seem to have quite a few adventure related titles. Maybe an article on the rebirth of the genre would be better suited. I would love to see the genre taking top spot on the charts again but I think gamers have changed the way they want to play games. Action, action and more action is more than ever in demand and those intellectual gamers are being converted as we speak. But the future looks bleak for adventure lovers with only one adventure game to be released in October out of 10 releases, that being Grim Fandango from LucasArts. The other only title Gabriel Knight 3 was unceremoniously delayed until 1999, irritating many lovers of the series, one of them me. The only logical answer for this is the money and sales. Action sells and it costs less to develop. Adventure uses plenty FMV which is expensive to deliver. NEVERTHELESS WE WANT MORE ADVENTURES!
Ed

The Demo Scene

DEMO CODING
THE BLACK ART

PAUL FURBER CONTINUES HIS LOOK INTO THE SA DEMO SCENE. – PART 3

We've looked at what demos are, how they are made up and this month's column looks at the core of any demo - the programming that goes into it. If you're not a programmer, don't despair. You could a) learn to become one or b) try out your musicianship or artistic skills should you wish to become part of the demo scene. If you want to learn then stay tuned for some useful pointers to more information.

How to get started

"Coding demos takes years of practice. It is not easy." Thus intones the Future Crew's text info file that accompanies their classic demo Second Reality. And with that, maybe I've put you off. But make no mistake, demo programming is demanding if you want to do it properly. Demo effects like real-time 3D graphics, lens flares, fog-

ging and texture mapping require lots of skill if you're going to do them yourself and not leave them up to a hardware accelerator. And pretty much the only way to get experience is to do it the hard way. This can mean many sleepless nights, lots of hunting around for documentation and plenty of disappointment when something doesn't work. In the days before the Internet was ubiquitous, programmers would swap code and ideas, hang around on Bulletin Board Systems (BBSs) and try things for themselves to learn more. This approach has been dampened somewhat since there are now vast resources available to the novice programmer, but it still applies. So go and have a look on the Internet but remember that nothing will substitute for learning yourself.

With this in mind, have a look at the one-stop shop for all things demo-related: http//www.hornet.org. For tutorials, search for tutorial in the search dialog and you'll find plenty enough to keep you happy. Or if you have some programming experience and want to see how a demo is put together, then follow the /code link and download some demo source code.

Language and OS

Ahh, the great debate. I've heard people say that real programmers don't use Pascal. What a load of bollocks. Some of the finest demos ever made have been written in Pascal. I've also heard that "it isn't a demo if it's not written in 100% assembler." Also bull. I've seen amazing demos that are written in C and C++ without a single line of assembler anywhere.

So what should you use? Well, that depends on which operating system you want to write for. Demos run fastest and can do the most when confronted with DOS. Sad but true. Windows variants and Linux all multitask which means your demo won't have 100% of the available CPU with which to do its magic. Also both Windows and Linux do not give you 100% control of the hardware in most cases but shield it through an application programming interface or API. On the other hand, some of the nightmares with incompatibility have gone thanks to the reasonably uniform architecture presented by Windows and Linux. Which language you want to use is up to you. Pascal - although well-supported - is waning in popularity as a choice for demo programmers. C is a better option for two reasons. Firstly there's loads of source code and tutorials available to choose from. Secondly, it's closer to the machine which is what you want when code must execute as fast as possible. C++ is the language of choice for games these days. Compilers are improving so the code they generate is quick enough for good performance, it's object-oriented so you should be able to reuse much of your code, and the language has many built-in assistants to break down complex problems into simpler ones.

Assembly language - the lowest, and potentially the fastest - of all the tools is nice to know but can be picked up as you go along. Next month I'll be covering all the choices you have for each OS, and which tools you might want to have in your armoury.

In the mean time mosey on down to http://surf.to/demos or the longer URL http://members.xoom.com/sademoscene and check out the Demo Starter Kit. It's packed with loads of goodies on how to get started writing your own demos.

Till next week - Maverick

COMMAND & CONQUER TIBERIAN SUN™

The Command & Conquer universe can clearly be defined as vintage real time strategy. Westwood has forged an empire and, not being content to sit back in complacency, has been very busy creating the next installment that will redefine the genre. The real question is how do you expand an empire? You conquer the opposition with better weapons and tactics, taking their territory and making it your own. Tiberian Sun is set to do just that - RedTide

Writer's block is a terrible thing - the reason for my current problem is honesty. I'm finding it very hard to give an objective opinion in this preview considering I've watched a small introduction snippet from Westwood more times tonight than I've seen Star Wars during my entire life (and I'm a big fan). It oozes quality and gives your adrenal glands a thorough workout. One has to wonder how a few screenshots and a quick video can convert a hardened unbiased reviewer into a trembling lump of jelly? Sensory stimulation - that's how.

The plant thing that ate the world

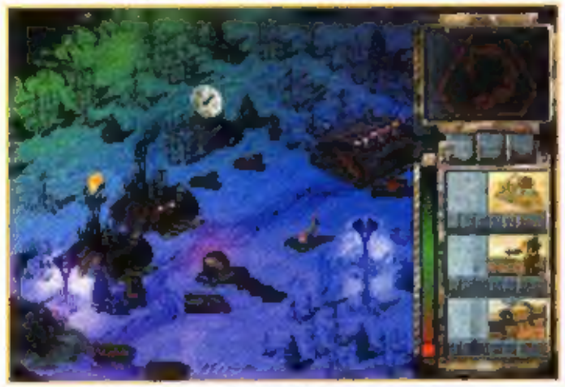
It's been a long and interesting twenty years, game time, since we last witnessed the brutal conflict between NOD and GDI. Tiberian Sun picks up from the scenario where GDI hammered Kane and his misfit bunch into submission. Much has changed, and now the Earth lies barren, humanity has taken to the stars and die hard Earth lovers have retreated to the icy cold Polar Regions to escape the relentless spreading of Tiberium, and much of the planet is controlled by the GDI's orbital space station. Since you last visited the world of Command & Conquer things have gone from bad to worse. When GDI defeated Nod they thought their troubles were over, but they were dead wrong. Ravaged by years of warfare, the planet is in a shambles. Worse still, the Tiberium that once seemed to be the answer to mankind's energy problems is now replicating itself at an alarming rate, destroying and twisting life wherever it spreads. During this twenty year stretch the remaining scattered factions of The Brotherhood of NOD have started surfacing from their underground sanctuary, led by a mysterious leader intent on the destruction of GDI. Two very different ideals conflict in Tiberian Sun, NOD seems to believe that Tiberium heralds the natural evolutionary course of mankind, GDI only wants to rid the planet of the mysterious substance and reclaim the Earth for normal habitation once again. Through all the years of evacuation and reorganisation many of the populace have been left by the wayside to fend for themselves. These mutant people are a disgruntled bunch who have scavenged the war torn lands, known only as The Forgotten. This time round the civilians aren't going to run away without a fight. As with the other superb titles in Westwood's bag, the story will unfold as the game progresses. The scene, as they say is very much set.

The night-time parade has finally come to real-time strategy

Tiberian extracts can accelerate hair growth - Kane is optimistic

The Tiberium from the last game now comes in two flavours, green and a reportedly new highly volatile blue variety. The blue Tiberium is more valuable but harvesting it presents it's own risks. The harvesters in Tiberian Sun will now also present much more of a tactical decision to destroy, as attacking them will result in some serious collateral damage to enemy units. Hopefully this will stave off those irritating harvester attacks. The mysterious substance has also led to a number of different approaches with regards to units. All units in the game are protected by airtight armour or sealed environments as well as the appearance of mutated infantry and special Tiberium clearing units that must remove all traces of the stuff before functional bases can be built. It is sad that current game releases never focus any attention on the story line, thank the heavens that story line is paramount to Westwood studios. Other developers should look long and hard at this sort of attention to detail.

Command & Conquer Tiberian Sun (cont)



Catch your opponent sleeping with pre-dawn manoeuvres.

The intensity of battle is shown by the realistic explosions.

Ion Storms, dynamic terrain and yes, even the toilets flush

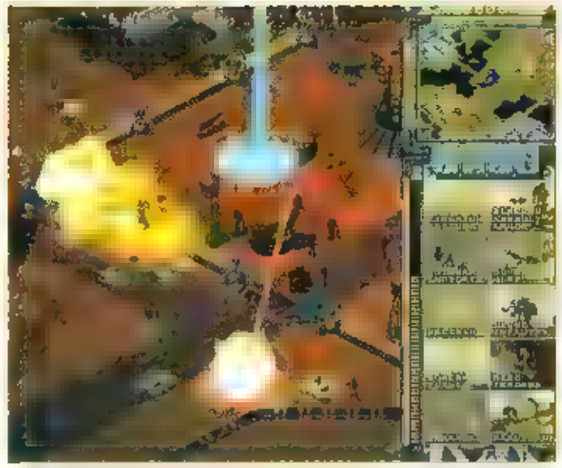
Westwood Studios has changed the angle on the action - it's more isometric now to cater for the 3D units and enhanced terrain features. At last we can say goodbye to 'flat' sprite based units. We'll begin with the Dynamic Terrain. Enemy fire leaves craters in the ground, your troops are flushed out of hiding by a raging forest fire and you loose a whole division of tanks on a sabotaged bridge. Rivers and lakes will freeze over allowing access to new areas of the map and the ice itself will be thicker in some places than others. Ion storms render certain units useless and poisonous gas clouds travel over the land. All of this occurs on different map scenarios such as desert, arctic and cityscapes. The list of tactical possibilities is endless if all these features are implemented correctly. Unit Experience - based on how many kills and what type of kills a certain unit makes, that unit's experience will grow. If a unit gains enough experience it's armor and hit points increase along with it's AI, so a smart soldier won't stay for long in a hopeless firefight but will rather retreat. Way point setting and unit AI - Westwood has promised a complex but easy to use way point system that will allow you to use the same way points again, so by selecting a popular attack route your units will follow the same path without you having to reassign it. Again the great AI question. Computer controlled units traditionally have dangerously low IQ scores but this time around your harvesters will not wander into trouble if left unattended as they incorporate threat assessment with their AI. Much is always promised in this department and we'll just have to wait and see. Special Forces Commandos are also going to be available in some missions. Tanya won't be returning in Tiberian Sun but there are special units that will be made available during certain missions. Dynamic lighting - explosions will light up the terrain and any buildings close enough. There will be night missions and during base attacks searchlights will light up the base making it easier to spot invaders.

Devil's tongue licks GDI base

The debate over quality or quantity will probably rage on for many decades but as things stand right now Westwood has opted for quality over quantity, saying that people don't want hundreds of different units to figure out but rather a smaller selection of carefully designed units. Westwood has also decided to scrap all naval units for Tiberian Sun, citing play balancing as the biggest problem with naval units. Many of you will probably remember the devastating attack power and range of certain naval units in Red Alert and those pesky submarines are now gone for good. The bases will also feature more modular components and instead of building a whole new structure you can add on to an existing one, saving space and eliminating the need for huge sprawling bases with many weak points.

With any big computer game release there is the important question about the new weapons you'll be playing with. Tiberian Sun promises to deliver more firepower than you can handle with its range of new units. We'll have a quick look at the good guys of the struggle. The Global Defence Initiative (GDI) have a powerful arsenal of 'traditional' new toys. Everything you have come to expect

Command & Conquer Tiberian Sun



A common sight for players when TS is launched - An ION STORM

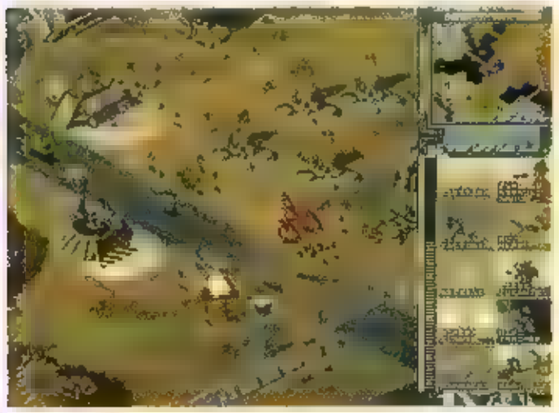
from futuristic armies
The Disruptor Tank is first on the list, much like a land based whale this tank is big and slow and its 'whale song' harmonises nicely with the blood curdling screams of your opponents. The Disruptor tank fires a sonic weapon that indiscriminately kills everything in its path, including your own units. On almost a complete opposite scale to the sonic tank the Hover MRLS (multiple-rocket launching system) is a very lightly armoured hovering unit that needs some comprehensive protection from enemy forces, as it delivers its devastating payload into your enemy commanders base. The Hover MRLS is also one of the units that will become completely disabled should it get caught in an Ion Storm. One point Westwood is quick to highlight is that the secret to good unit design is including an Achilles heel in each one. If you can find and exploit each units weakness then you're a long way down the road to victory. Another interesting unit that the GDI have at their disposal is the Deployable Sensor Array. This unit is essential for spotting cloaked NOD units but much like the Hover MRLS it needs protection due to its weak armour. Back at home sweet home GDI have a few new and improved structures. The guard towers from the first game have been redesigned and can now be fitted with a number of different defensive hard points. You can put mini sides, rocket launchers and infantry cannons onto one tower. You should rarely need to use the guard towers because the enemy aren't going to get past the Ion storm defence system. This new force field generator transfers all attacks directly back into it's own generator. This defence system has two major weak points though for starters can disable it for extended periods of time and it is also susceptible to overloading and shutting down, so when you see it, throw everything you have at it.

Voxel over voodoo - Westwood's programming vanguard promises voxel vindication

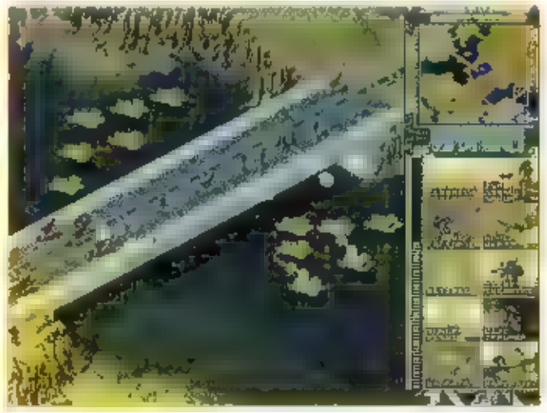
To achieve the realistic 3D effects in Tiberian Sun the programmers have been working hard at using Voxels for this task instead of polygons. Polygons represent a programming nightmare where high-end processors are required to run games using polygons like Quake 2 for example. Westwood has always catered for those of us with slower processors and Tiberian Sun is no exception. Voxels are easy to animate and don't use as many processing cycles as say Quake would. This means you don't need 3D acceleration or a beefy computer to run Tiberian Sun.

To cloak or not to cloak that is the fashion statement

The Brotherhood of NOD have always been notorious for having all the dirty units and doesn't detail to aim a few blows below the belt. Tame tanks and genetically altered humans are just some of the nasty things that Kane's been cooking up since we first saw him.
NOD Units are always fun to use in a battle and anyone who played the first game will fondly remember sneaking cloaked tanks into the enemy base and making them all attack at the same time - this tactic redefined the word panic. The first universal unit in the NOD arsenal is the Cyborg. With a little Tiberium down the throat after each meal the cyborg has grown up to be the ultimate soldier, much like one of the special commandos these units present a tough challenge. The first 'heavy' NOD unit we're investigating is the Devil's Tongue. This tank can burrow under base defences and pop up during suppertime, before you can put a stop to it it will cook a few soldiers and grind the ashes up under its tracks. Nonetheless evil is a good phrase to describe the NOD arsenal. Besides these two units you will get to use the Stealth Generator which renders all units in its vicinity invisible. The Missile Silo isn't a new structure but it has been modified and you can now select a number of different warheads such as biological missiles and cluster missiles.
This is just a small taste of some of the new equipment you'll be able to use in Tiberian Sun. Besides these get ready for the Impulse Cannon, rampaging mutant attack dogs and harvesters that fight back. Gentlemen, let the battle begin!



A new feature uncommon to the strategy genre is the inclusion of gates

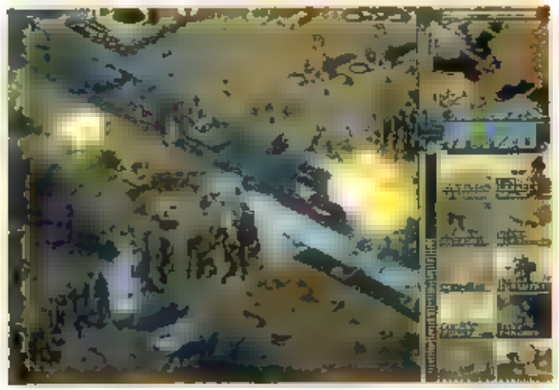


No C&C haven't invented floatable tanks, the weather has frozen the water

Command & Conquer Tiberian Sun (cont)

What is Voxel Technology?

I'm going to throw journalistic caution to the wind and go deep with a technical phrase. The answer is, Quaternion-based motion and dynamic phong-shaded voxels. The Question. What makes Tiberian Sun a technological marvel? This is a brief technical lesson that might go a long way to explain why games these days take a little longer to develop. Most of you know what a pixel is. Picture element for those of us who weren't paying attention, a pixel is a point of light in 2 dimensional space i.e. a small dot on your screen, many of these differently coloured pixels form the image you see on the screen. In essence Westwood is returning to basics and instead of the polygon nightmare that makes games like Quake II tick, they are using voxels (volumetric Pixel), 3D pixels. Think of a voxel as a 3D pixel that looks like a dice. In 3D graphics the sides of this dice need to be shaded and different techniques can be used, in the case of Tiberian Sun Phong shading was decided on. It takes longer to render a phong-shaded object but the results are much better.
To explain quaternion-based motion, by this an far size. A quaternion is a rotation matrix that adds an extra dimension to the rotation formula and by using this method the programmers can rotate an object through a 'cleaner' rotational axis. This method eliminates 'shuttering' and makes for much smoother animation. What this boils down to is another animation due to continuous [illegible] made possible by adding a fourth dimension to a rotation formula. Phew!



A contrast of beauty comes from a waterfall to dither the death of war

But do we really need another Real Time Strategy game?

After Total Annihilation, Starcraft and Age Of Empires, fans of the genre are going to be hard to please. It's been the year of Real Time Strategy games and currently the market is flooded with games ranging from truly excellent to down-right rubbish. You haven't jumped on the bandwagon yet then I'd suggest you wait for the real thing have no doubt that Tiberian Sun will be the biggest game of 1998. That is if it makes its release date. November is just around the corner and we've been assured that the Tiberian Sun team at Westwood is currently living at work. From the line waste that brought you games like Dune 2, Command & Conquer and Red Alert, Westwood knows how to put together a good game and from what we've seen already, Tiberian Sun is going to rock the globe.

Red line

The walking annihilator which has a strong resemblance to MechWarrior

Tiberian fever hits Tinsel Town

If one thing can be said about Hollywood hype its that it finds its way into everything. Everyone loves the stars and Westwood has managed to land two hugely successful and well-known actors to star in their full-motion video clips. James Earl Jones (Voice of Mufasa -The Lion King, Hunt For Red October and Star Wars Trilogy) and Michael Biehn (The Terminator, Aliens and The Rock) both play on the side of GDI. Jones plays General Solomon, leader of the GDI forces and Biehn plays commander McNeil. Good news is that Joe Kucan will be reprising his original role as Kane, that nasty piece of work from the first game. It has also been reported that Westwood Studios are talking to a major film studio about producing a Command & Conquer science fiction action adventure movie.

"Here's a true role-playing game... a 1998 blockbuster!"

FORGOTTEN REALMS

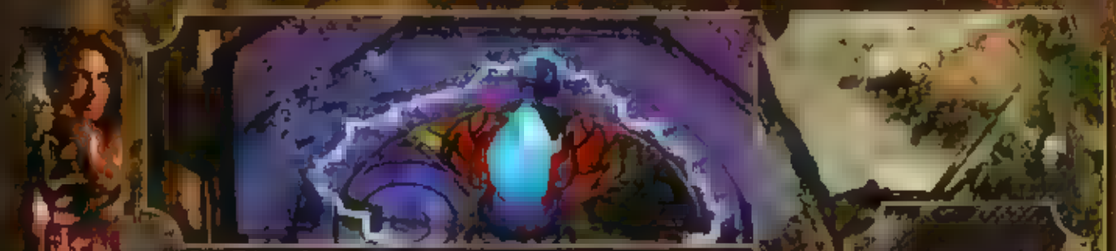
Baldur's Gate

"This is going to be BIG in every sense of the word."

PC Gaming World

Prepare to be immersed into a world of intrigue and mystery on a perilous quest to rescue a storied land from impending war. Even your own soul is at stake in you, and a party of adventurers become entangled in a dangerous riddle of betrayal, alliances, dark prophecies and murder.

Will you become the unlikely hero of the story, or merely another of its unfortunate casualties? Before you answer, the big guy in back might have something to say about it.



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CONTROL every aspect of YOUR character

PUMMEL your enemies to DEATH!

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BIOWARE

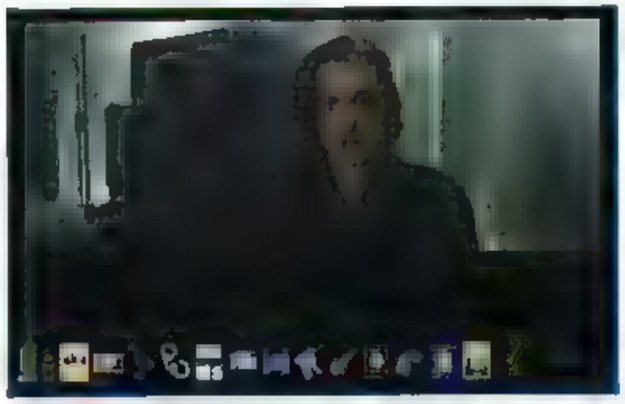
ELECTRONIC ARTS

Finally something good can come out of DarkSkies! After abductions he has donned his grey suit and dark glasses and delves into the paranormal [illegible] and intrigue of one of the most anticipated titles of the year.

PC CD-ROM

THE X FILES... GAME

The X-Files series has captivated audiences all around the world ever since its inception. Then came the video series, then the motion picture... so... Should come as no surprise that this phenomenon has finally been made into a game. To be precise, an adventure game. But I prefer to call it an interactive episode of the X-Files series.



Agent Willmore certainly has very large pockets for all those goodies, hey its the FBI.

Scully and Mulder have mysteriously disappeared and you play the part of a FBI agent, called Willmore, who has been assigned by Assistant Director Skinner to find the missing agents. Along the way you will be able to interact with various characters from the popular TV series including Mulder, Scully, Skinner and X. Cigarette Gunman even make an appearance adding their educational parallels to the game. As always there is an alien mixed into the plot, otherwise it wouldn't be the X-Files. This is where the story and plot get a bit predictable and any X-File fan will be able to pinpoint the episode in which the alien made his debut per [illegible] episode entitled 'Piper Maru'. I would have preferred a new alien, but what's done is done. The story remains intriguing none the less and any fan of the supernatural and unexplained phenomena should thoroughly enjoy it.

One area I was looking forward was interacting with Scully and Mulder and I am sad to say the experience was disappointing. They only appear on the last CD to make a short appearance. Come on guys, X-Files fans want to play with the stars a bit. 10 minutes just won't do.

The X-Files plays like an interactive episode of the series and any X-Files fan should feel right at home. The factors that give the game its feeling are the high-resolution static photographs and QuickTime 3 FMV sequences. They are of such high quality that it adds to the experience and belies ability of being in an X-Files episode. This game would have been a prime candidate for DVD and I am actually surprised that Fox Interactive didn't include a DVD version but even without it, it has the most impressive video I have seen to date on a PC. You need a jacked system to turn on all the bells & whistles, but for anybody the video card required to suit your specific system albeit that you might have a few of some of the options. This is also where you will find a unique feature and it is the first time I have seen it in a game. You have the option of turning on sub-liminal messages, some things that flash right in the X-Files sequence. Whether it has any effect I don't know, all I know is that the graphics combined with the eerie music is enough to make most people paranoid enough to search the house for aliens before going to bed.

Help, I have just seen DarkSkies, let me out of here!!

I dislike a lot of adventures, the X-Files doesn't use any puzzle-based problems, all that is needed is decent detective work to finish the game. As agent Willmore you have access to the FBI's database to search for suspects, look up phone numbers and for forensic work the crime labs to analyse all the evidence. Everything a budding detective needs to solve any puzzle.

As is standard with adventure games these days, the X-Files Game uses a point and click interface. You move agent Willmore around the world using arrow pointer where you find hotspots, usually indicating that there is something of interest in the area.

Disappointingly the gameplay is totally linear, everything has to be done in a specific sequence. The game is so linear that it can be frustrating at times, an example early in the game agent Willmore has to collect evidence from the scene where Scully and Mulder have disappeared. To see the evidence you have to stand in specific spot facing a specific way, there is no way to see it from any other area even if the place in question is in view.

Taking all the frustrating points into consideration The X-Files still is one of the better adventure games to hit the shelves lately. Definitely a must for any X-Files fan or any adventure aficionado. Who knows in 20 years time it might be a collector item worth more than a donor's heart.

Dark Skies

Adventure

Min Required	Recommended
Pentium 120 MHz 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 640x480 16Bit SVGA 300 Mg Hard Drive Space QuickTime 3 Win 95/98	Pentium 166 MHz 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 640x480 32Bit SVGA 3.5 Gig Hard Drive Space QuickTime 3 Win 95/98

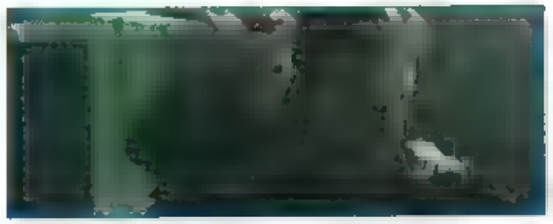
Developer: FOX Interactive

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Supplier: EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212

RRP: R 329.00

International Demo Site
N/A



Don't fret, the FBI will rid you of that pesky mole.

UFO Related Sites

Here are some links to UFO and conspiracy related documents I examined a while ago, all of them were written by a group calling themselves Brancon which is a pseudonym, definitely interesting if nothing else. I Could say that it scared the living hell out of me just to think that some of it might be true

http://www.eagle-net.org/eaglemain/ext.htm
http://www.eagle-net.org/dulce/

The X-Files comes to the PC in the form of an Adventure game. Play as a FBI agent and interact with all the famous actors from the TV series, even the Lone Gunman. The games have excellent FMVs but fails to offer any replayability, with its very linear [illegible]

83 | 81 | 80 | 84

www.foxinteractive.com

None

Excellent FMV
Unique Gameplay
Will Appeal To X-Files Fans

Very Linear
Not Challenging Enough

OVERALL RATING

84

IAN LIVINGSTONE'S

DEATHTRAP Dungeon

PC CD-ROM

From the people who brought you Tomb Raider I and II comes a potentially great cross between [illegible] and the third-person perspective of the adventure-based titles. I say potentially because the game is full of excellent ideas which are ultimately ruined by sloppy execution.

But first things first. Baron Sukumvit (cool name) rules over the town of Fang which you find yourself in. Thanks to an outstanding rendered intro, you learn that there's a dungeon to be conquered and no-one of the seventeen-odd aspirants so far has emerged in one piece. The intro is very funny at this point - Joe Schmo in his armour waltzes casually into the dungeon beating a wheelbarrow full of weapons with which he hopes to conquer all. After a few mishaps with traps, an enraged T-Rex and a cute pig that happens to be strapped to half a case of dynamite, poor old Joe turns up back at the pub with a massive axe in his back. Can you do better?

Maybe. Kill the dragon at the end and emerge alive and the 18 000 gold pieces offered by the Baron as a prize are yours to buy a new PC with. You [illegible] a choice of two characters to control throughout the game's twelve levels. Red Lotus is the babe and Chaindog is the hunk. She sports, erm, well - not a lot really but most of it seems to be black leather. He's a huge outhouse of a man that looks every inch the medieval warrior. Along the way you'll encounter many many bad guys - way more than the handful of nasties that Tomb Raider offered, as well as a host full of traps. These can be quite nasty - exploding walls, arrows, the "two-wheeled knackerers" which roll around slicing anything in their path, and the usual pits and spikes. Solve the puzzles, pull the right levers, avoid the traps and kill the bad guys and you should be fine. There's close-combat weapons and spells to use as well, which should please fans used to Lara's almost perfect aim.

Well almost. DD is a great idea. Tomb Raider could have incorporated the sword-wielding-charge-naked-at-the-monsters approach but ultimately it's a 3D platform game with added puzzles. DD brings combat to the third person environment in what could be a really cool way. Unfortunately it's let down by two very important things - control and the camera. This is a bit strange since TR I (and II) are solid [illegible] departments so you would think a game from the same development house might have paid a little more attention to the other titles in the stable. They didn't and the result is an annoying camera that often doesn't quite show you the correct view, clips poorly when moving around and makes it tricky to fight or avoid things or both. There is a FP perspective, but it's accessed with a single key which you must hold down. While holding this key down, you can't move or shoot or fight which is a problem. Or, [illegible] reflection this problem might just be a function of the game's dual approach - combat with added 3D views of the dungeon. But either way, it's annoying. The camera is slow too and lacks the snap needed when panning around very large [illegible]

Min Required	Recommended
Pentium 90 MHz 16 MB RAM 4 X Drive Sound Blaster 16bit SBPA 130Mg Hard Drive Space Microsoft Comp Mouse Win 95/98	Pentium 166 MMX 32 MB RAM 8 X Drive 3D Accelerator (3Dfx etc.) 130Mg Hard Drive Space Microsoft Comp Mouse Win 95/98

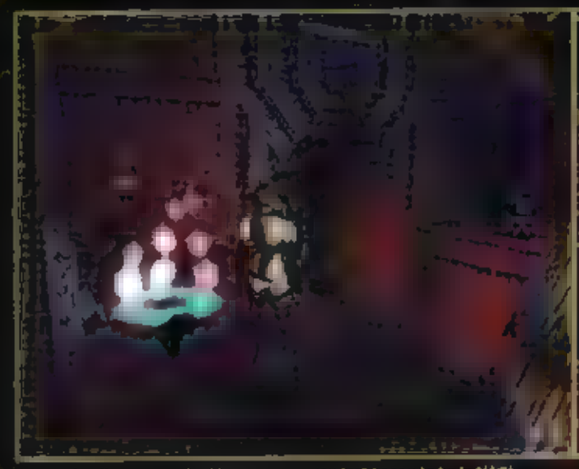
Developer Asylum Studios

Publisher Eidos Interactive

Supplier EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212

RRP R 319.00

International Site
www.eidosinteractive.com



Are these your cheekbones or are you just happy to be in NAG?

Surely there is a better way of carrying daggers than through your leg?

Control is equally annoying. Either keyboard or joystick can be used to control your character but thanks to the number of things you can do, it ends up complicated and fiddly. Slashing at monsters while jumping sideways from an outside camera happens often - and it's tricky which lets the game down. Another big annoyance is turning - you have to turn in the direction you want to go and then walk forward to do so. In a game where this happens as a matter of course, it can become quickly frustrating.

This is a pity since the game has tremendous potential. The levels look good, the traps have been well thought out and the use of lighting and colour adds a lot of believability. Sound has been used to good effect while playing, although it's overused in the menu which grated me. A shame really since lots of thought and originality has gone into the menu design.

Thematically the game doesn't hang together too well either. The introduction gives you the right idea - wander through a dungeon, avoiding traps and hacking monsters, but the levels and feel of playing it don't fit with this. Similarly it's not a Tomb Raider clone, but ends up playing like one without the gorgeous levels and environmental variety which made TR a classic.

Eidos say multiplayer support is on the way. Quite how that will work is anyone's guess, because single-player is difficult enough as it is. If you're a swords and sorcery type then you might find some mileage from wandering through the levels, trying out the different weapons in each and solving the puzzles. I found the game made me anticipate more than it could deliver and ended up disappointed. It's a series of excellent ideas somewhat spoilt by poor attention to two of the basics - your perspective and your controls.

Maverick

REVIEWED WITH CREATIVE 3D BLASTER VOODOO²

Overall a disappointing title given its promise. Slasher types will enjoy the battling the dragon and lesser monsters, puzzle fanatics will have fun with the tricks and traps, but neither will enjoy the game as a whole. The camera will probably cause headaches before long and too much use of the controls might lead to New Keyboard Syndrome.

80	85	50	60	70	55

www.eidosinteractive.com

OVERALL RATING

68

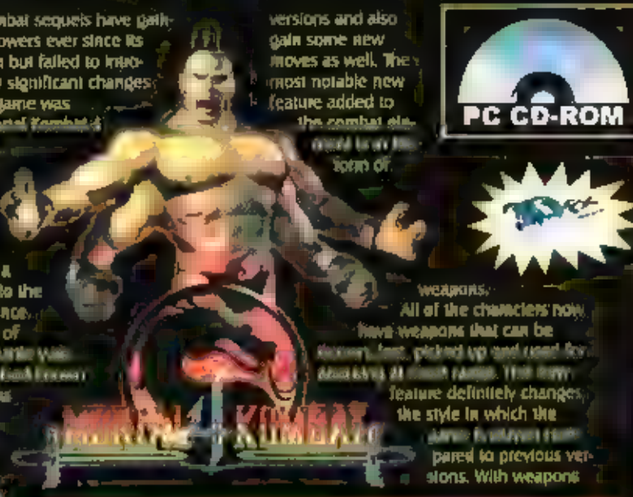
Nightmare Creatures
Tomb Raider II

+ Good Looking
+ Remarkable
+ Great Menus

- Bad Camera
- Worse Controls
- Mixed-Up Feeling

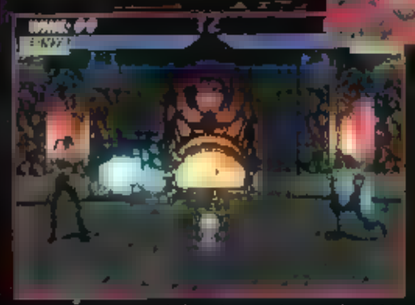
Mortal Kombat sequels have gathered followers ever since its inception but failed to introduce any significant changes to the way the game was played. With Mortal Kombat 4 at the helm, the game introduces some new technology to the Mortal Kombat world and adds a few new twists to the fighting experience.

Thousands of years ago in a battle with the fallen Elder Gods known as Shinnok, I was responsible for the death of an entire civilisation. To rid the world of Shinnok's menace I waged a war that banished him



Earth into centuries of darkness and banished Shinnok into a place called the Netherealm. Now after Shao Kahn's defeat at the hands of Earth's warriors, Shinnok has managed to escape his confines in the Netherealm. The war is now being fought once again. Only this time it can be won by mortals." - The Words of Raiden. The typical type storyline for a Mortal Kombat sequel, although it could have been more original and better integrated into the game, but Mortal Kombat has always aimed to be a beat-em-up type game with no frills with plenty of action.

Eight of the old character favourites are back and seven new faces have been added to give gamers access to 16 different characters. The old characters retain their special abilities from previous versions and also gain some new moves as well. The most notable new feature added to the combat element is in the form of weapons. All of the characters now have weapons that can be thrown, lost, picked up and used for a limited time. This new feature definitely changes the style in which the game is played compared to previous versions. With weapons the advantage can change very quickly from one player to the other, giving even novices the chance to beat masters if they practise enough.



Who needs an icy cold beer when you have an icy shiv.

MK4 is aimed at the single player and 2-player market with a variety of different modes for each. For single player there are 5 difficulty modes to choose from which will keep even the most experienced MK fighter busy as he challenges his way to the top of each.

Multiplayer support in Mortal Kombat 4 is disappointing to say the least. In an age where most games have adopted either Internet or LAN capabilities, MK4 can only come to the party with 2 player head-to-head combat. This mode is played using only one PC and most MK fans will be disappointed if they can't at least play someone on a LAN.

The tournament mode where 2 to 8 players can participate in a competition of skills would have been an ideal candidate for LAN play. Unfortunately the 8 players will have to keep switching positions and constantly [illegible] which makes the experience not worth the effort put into it.

For control MK4 uses the keyboard or a gamepad. Personally I prefer a gamepad, its much easier to the use but at the lack of precision due to the D-Pad. On the flip side special moves are easier to perform using the keyboard but then at cost of comfort, especially when there are 2 players using it.

From a graphics standpoint Mortal Kombat has never looked so good. The new 3D engine combined with 3D acceleration gives gamers an ultra smooth frame rate with highly detailed characters instead of the old 2D graphics of previous versions. The special effects used for moves has also adopted the 3D acceleration and now has features like transparency and blurring added for a more realistic look. Special moves and fatalities have never been so much fun!

This time around MK4 makes some advances in the graphics arena but fails to add basic networking support and still has a weak storyline like previous sequels, making it a game for the 1-2 player beat-em-up or Mortal Kombat fans. It does however implement these modes exceptionally well.

PC CD-ROM

Beat-Em-Up	
Min Required	Recommended
Pentium 133 MHz 16MB RAM	Pentium 166 MMX 32MB RAM
3D Compatible Sound	3D Compatible Sound
Developer: Midway	
Publisher: GT Interactive	
Supplier: Datatac Tel: (011) 233-1076	
Price: R 299.00	
International Site www.midway.com	

CREATIVE 3D BLASTER VOODOO²

Mortal Kombat 4 is the natural sequel to the MK series and features 3D environments with 3D-acceleration support. There are new characters, moves and weapons. Single Player is highly entertaining, unfortunately the same cannot be said for multiplayer.

Support are multiple players will have to settle for playing on one machine.

87 | 80 | 84 | 62 | 74 | 83

www.midway.com

OVERALL RATING 78

+ 2 Player 3 Players. On A Single PC. No Network Support.

Mortal Kombat Series Versus Fighter 2? One Must Fall

+ Spectacular Graphics
+ New Characters
+ New Combat Elements

Weak Story
Lack Of Network Support

MECHCOMMANDER

lately the strategy genre has begun to come into its own, with a veritable glut of Command & Conquer clones on the market. While the original titles that gave birth to this type of game were ahead of their peers and can now be considered true classics, very few have risen above mediocrity. Notable exceptions to this were, of course, the Warcraft saga and the Command & Conquer series and, more recently, Dark Reign and Starcraft. However, it seems that few developers have been able to instil new ideas in the genre. It was therefore very refreshing to take a look at a real-time strategy game with a few differences.

MechCommander revisits the Battletech universe, where gigantic robot-like machines are the hardest-hitting weapons of war. Previous titles, such as MechWarrior and EarthSiege, explored this environment from a first-person perspective, placing you in the cockpit of the controls of such machines. Now we have the first commander's view of the nightmare battlefield of the 31st Century.

Many hundreds of years ago, the nations (or star systems) of the galaxy flourished, together in the Star League, and no conflicts or wars took place. Human nature, however, asserted itself in the form of one man's ambition, and so the Star League fell. Some wished for the return to that lost unity, and left to start their second attempt at paradise on other worlds. These became the Clans, while those who remained formed the Inner Sphere. The Inner Sphere was never, until now, harmonious, as internal strife was always present. Now, however, the Clans have returned to re-establish the Star League by force.

Those of you who have played any of the popular real-time strategy games are very familiar with the concept of resources. The conventional approach is that there are some form of minerals/vegetation/deposits, etc that are readily and easily harvestable in battlefield conditions. MechCommander takes a more unorthodox view: the military command above you award Resource Points to commanders on a requisition basis. In other words, based on your performance as a military leader, as well as completion of various strategic objectives, you will obtain varying amounts of credit to equip your 'Lance' (basic Inner Sphere military unit) with mechs, vehicles, weapons and, most important, MechWarriors. These are your pilots, and they gain experience, therefore improving their skills, as they progress from one battle to the next, eventually attaining the most coveted rank of Elite.

Furthermore, a vital aspect of the mechcommander's economy will is the acquisition of items salvaged from the battlefield, which includes burnt-out husks of his opponents' mechs, as well as supplies captured from his enemies. The more equipment is salvaged in the field, the fewer replacement purchases need to be made to refit your fighting unit. Also the Clans' technology is superior to the Inner Sphere's, therefore it is advantageous to capture as much of their equipment as possible. Any excess, unwanted hardware may be 'sold' to Battalion Command in exchange for Resource Points.

This novel approach to the resource issue is reminiscent of old turn based titles, where one started with set units at the beginning of the mission, and needed to find a way to deploy those units in a more effective way than the opponent. The result of this is that the game truly becomes a test of strategic and tactical skills.

With the usual calmness, Raven dispatches another arsenal on unsuspecting rivals

There are two distinct levels to this game: strategy and tactics. The logistics interface is where the mechcommander shapes his overall war strategy: does he use many small mechs or does he opt for several huge, formidably armed ones? Does he employ jump technology as a rule? Does he diversify his forces or does he try to standardise them? All these factors and many more come into play while deciding how to approach a mission.

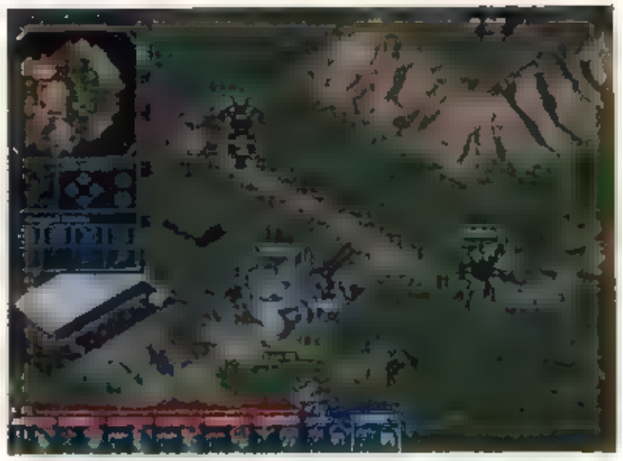
The Tactical Interface is where all the plans and decisions are put to the test. This is the battle simulation mode where the mechcommander controls his troops in the heat of battle. The action is real-time, on a beautifully rendered 3D battlefield where terrain plays a very real part in shaping the battle. Line-of-sight is determined by the contours of the land, and high ground is very desirable, as you cannot shoot at what you cannot see! Alas, of the terrain is, to some extent, interactive, as you can destroy bridges, houses and the like, and even set the forest on fire, especially if you would like to take an alternative route to an objective. Mechs may trample smaller obstacles, such as light walls, huts and small trees, not to mention the hapless drivers that often survive the destruction of their tanks or armoured vehicles. Mechs also leave footprints in the ground (nice touch.)

The mechs are animated in their current condition: therefore, should one of your units have a seriously damaged leg, then you will see it dragging it, and its movement will be slowed. Should a mech fall over (yes, it happens!), you will see it pick itself up again, assuming, of course, that it is in a condition to do so! A zoomed-in view mode gives a close-up view of the action, should you desire, but generally limits the mechcommander's awareness of the battlefield.

One feels personally involved with the command interface and, especially, the in-game radio voice-overs. The pilots constantly talk to you about how the mission is going, reporting on acquired targets, kills scored and, in particular, danger. They tend to sound somewhat panicky when their mechs' armour starts getting stripped off by an enemy's guns, and this makes the experience all the more immediate and real. For mechcommander, it's aware of all his pilots on an individual level, eventually learning their strengths and weaknesses.

Sadly, the control interface lacks some flexibility and features that are common to most other real-time strategy games. However, once accustomed, I found that it is fairly intuitive and not too limiting. The maximum force a mechcommander may field is twelve units, so keeping track becomes easy after a while. The map may be zoomed to several ranges, which is convenient in a close-quarters fire-fight.

The available variety of mechs, weapons, vehicles and pilot personalities borders on the bewildering. To me, this means many hours of entertainment as I experiment with various strategies on the campaign level. The single player's campaign is divided into four Operations, each consisting of six missions. Some of these missions border on the impossible, while some are [redacted] easy. This may be intentional, in an attempt to simulate battlefield conditions. Ultimately there is no denying that this game is challenging in the extreme.



If the size ratio is anything to go by, then the HQ's is terribly undersized

While the plot is believable from a military point of view, and the setting is rich, the story is not concerned with developing characters in any depth. Essentially it chronicles the progress of a military campaign by the Inner Sphere to drive out the invading Clans and counterattack them. This it does very well.

With the scope for almost infinite tinkering with variables, I have found this game eminently playable and addictive. The graphics are crisp and appealing, though the mechs tend to look somewhat alike in the default zoomed out view, and the sound is totally immersing, complete with radio static and emotion in the pilots' voices, and includes a moody soundtrack that reflects the battle field situation. The manual is well-presented, colourful and informative, with lots of background narrative. MechCommander is an innovative look at the world of MechWarrior, and manages to maintain the feel of that classic game, even though the two belong to entirely different genres.

Raven!

Strategy

Pentium 133 MHz 16 MB RAM 4 X CDROM 2 Mg SVGA Video Card 100 Mg Hard Drive Space DX5 Compatible Sound Win 95/98 (Direct X 5)	Pentium 166 MMX 32 MB RAM 4 X CDROM 2 Mg SVGA Video Card 200 Mg Hard Drive Space DX5 Compatible Sound Win 95/98 (Direct X 5)

Developer: Microprose

Publisher: Microprose

Supplier: EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212
R 329.00

www.mechcommander.com
Size: 116 Mg

RAVEN squeezes into his battlesuit, jumps into his MechWarrior and lets rip on this latest addition to the Strategy Genre

OVERALL RATING

It's a novel approach that merges real-time strategy with elements of role-play (and first-person). Truly places you in the commander's seat! Mech-Commander takes place in the detailed world of Battletech and is officially endorsed by FASA.	88
	95
	75
	80
	90
	85

www.mechcommander.com

LAN IPX/SPX (2-6)
Internet TCP/IP (2)
Modem (2)
Serial (2)

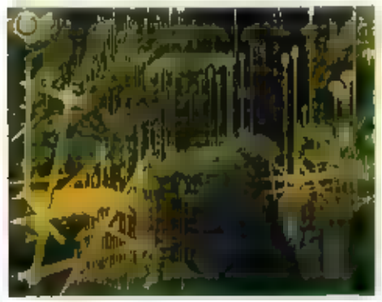
+ Good AI
+ Good Attention To Detail
+ True Strategy & Tactics
- Interface Could Be Better
- Resource Hungry

OVERALL RATING: 86

THE FEEBLE FILES

PC CD-ROM

The Feeble Files from Adventure Soft brings back old memories of past space adventure games like Space Quest and Leisure Suit Larry. It has been a while since a game has combined adventure with a wacky story line and good graphics, which The Feeble Files does exceptionally well. Adventure gamers that have been in the market for a while will remember that



Adventure Soft developed Simon The Sorcerer II as well, which was just as wacky. You play the part of Feeble, a loyal Company citizen working for the Omni Corporation who controls the lives of all its Citizens, by that I mean you obey or you get a healthy dose of personality restructuring, the greatest sin is of course being unhappy which has an automatic death penalty.

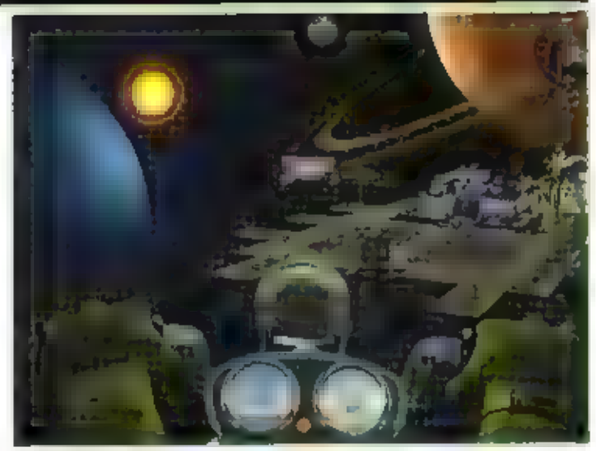
Feeble is an employee of the Minister of Galactic Uncertainty Crop Circle Division, and his job entails making crop circles on the planet Earth to confuse the populace. On his way back from a recent crop circle job he crashed into a probe, knocking it off course, which proceeds to crash into a Corporation installation, and to make matters worse the [redacted] to be his work place. For this violation Feeble gets sent to Cygnus Alpha for some personality reconstruction where he joins up with the freedom fighter movement to add a little of his spice to the movement.

From here on things get interesting as Feeble tries to free the citizens from the Omni Corporation's iron rule.

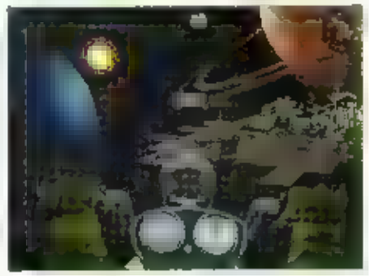
From here on in you get involved in betrayal, revolutions and even have a bit of cross-dressing which makes Feeble look utterly ridiculous (But with all the ugly looking aliens in this game he might just get a date).

The story is refreshingly different from most adventure games and features animated graphics rather than the usual photo-realistic video. The animated graphics and cut scenes are on par with the best out there, no 3Dfx or any other acceleration, just good old fashion DirectX graphics. Let's face it, since when does an adventure game need acceleration. The characters and environments are highly detailed rendered models that were made in 3D Studio and animated using Power Animator. Even though the world was rendered in 3D it has a flat feel to it making the world more alive and giving it an aura of pure fun, just like the games of yesteryear.

The Feeble Files probably has the longest cut scenes I have seen in my gaming career, some of them run for a full 4 minutes and [redacted] doesn't hold back any punches as far as quality goes either. Most of the cut scenes utilise the game engine while others are fully rendered interlaced high-action scenes where Feeble, or one of his companions, goes about wreaking havoc.



An area where The Feeble Files stands out is in the sheer amount of dialogue throughout the game, even your Oracle talks. According to the box there are six thousand lines of dialogue to be explored. Unfortunately some of the accents sound phoney and a couple of the sound effects could have been better which impacts the sound score.



Adventure

Pentium 90 MHz 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2Mg SVGA 25Mg Hard Drive Space DirectX 5 Win 95/98	Pentium 166 MMX 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 2Mg SVGA 25Mg Hard Drive Space DirectX 5 Win 95/98

Adventure Soft

Adventure Soft

Supplier: Gametronix
Tel: (011) 886-1972

RRP: R 299.00

N/A

Armed with the wisdom of Unknowing Knowledge DarkSkies sets forth on this humourous quest to help a feeble rebellion overcome its nemesis.

The Feeble Files

(cont)

Dental hygiene has never looked so good. Drill please!

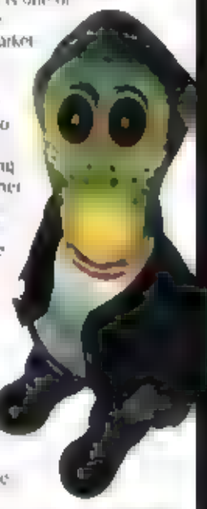
Even as a transvestite Feeble cannot get a date

The Feeble Files plays like any adventure game using a point and click interface which all gamers should be familiar with. There is one annoying problem however, the cursor changes back to the default cursor every time you click on a hotspot, this is cumbersome when you want to perform one action on a variety of objects, e.g. looking at everything in a room.

Most of the game revolves around solving puzzles and following up on clues, but there are a number of action sequences to add some variety, and the ability to control two characters simultaneously gives this adventure a new twist. You need to use these characters in a co-operative effort to solve certain problems. Some of the problems and puzzles can be truly difficult, not because of the way you need to solve them but because of the random element. Every time you come across certain puzzles the solution changes and you have to re-evaluate the situation and find a new solution, but this is what makes adventure gaming challenging after all.

One innovative feature I found is in the form of your Oracle, a hand held watch with a million and one uses. It stores all your items, informs you as to what still needs to be done and has reference material on the Company and the Rebellion. Although the Oracle doesn't give detailed information on a step by step basis of tasks to be done, it's still a valuable asset when you find yourself stuck.

The Feeble Files is one of the better adventure games on the market today. It has a few flaws but nothing major, and all of the elements stand up to today's standards. Unfortunately nothing sets it apart from other good games on the market. For those of you that long for the old days where adventure games had a cartoon feel to them and offer a decent adventure that would keep you occupied and immerse you into a totally wacky story, The Feeble Files could be for you.



Dark Skies

"The Feeble Files" brings wacky space based adventure back to the forefront. The characters are memorable. The puzzles are tough and will keep veterans challenged with their dynamic solutions. A game in the vein of Space Quest.

85	74	78	83	79	82

www.adventuresoft.com

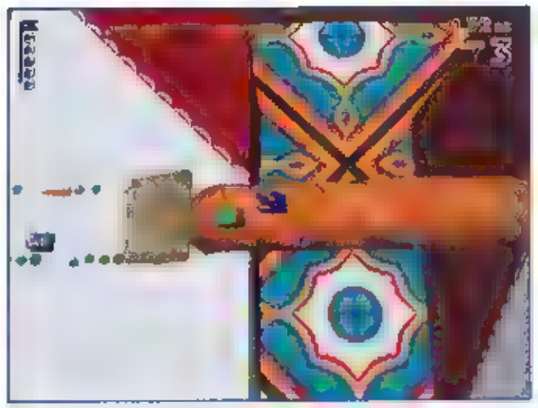
OVERALL RATING: 80

None

Space Quest Series Full Throttle

+ Excellent Graphics
+ Interesting Story
+ Tough Puzzles

Frustrating Sequences
No Sound Options
Needs Better Controls



Talk about stretching your diet. Hey, anybody seen my triple mustard slider

ing them.

In MMV3 you can play as any of the 8 characters, each with a distinctly different appearance.

Top-Down Racing

Min Required	Recommended
Pentium 120 MHz 30 Acc Pentium 166 MMX 16MB RAM 4 X CDrom 1Mg SVGA 40 Mg Hard Drive Space Win95	Pentium 166 MMX 16MB RAM 8 X CDrom 3D Accelerator 3Dfx etc. 40 Mg Hard Drive Space Wind 5 Sound Win95 98

Developer: Codemasters

Publisher: Codemasters

Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse
Tel: (011) 315-1000

RRP: R 329.00

International Site
www.codemasters.com

Its been quite a while since the last version of the timeless classic Micro Machines. Soul Assassin takes his microscope to the sequel.

I think every guy no matter what their age will know what a Micro Machine is. For all the girls out there, it is a miniature replication of a real life vehicle made to scale. Every little boys dream is to own a collection of them, like they say... Men and boys are the same, only the price on their toys change! Now the thrill of driving these little miniatures comes to the PC in the form of Micro Machines V3 from Codemasters.

Micro Machines makes for pure racing fun with a little destructive mayhem thrown into the mix. MMV3 offers gamers a chance to drive any of the 32 types of miniature vehicles on 48 different tracks. The vehicles come in a variety of factories, everything from camp trucks, monster trucks to speedboats and jeeps.

Words would be the best way to describe the tracks in Micro Machines. There is none of the traditional scenes found in other racing sims. Instead they stay true to the original as you race in coffee tables, kitchen tables, school desks and the floor, to name but a few. So you will encounter conventional hazards, as seen from a moving isometric top-down view. On the tracks, cheerio and mixing tasks become hurdles, high objects and not just tools of comfort.

As if that isn't enough, there are also multiple power-ups available on the tracks ranging from hammers to flatten your opponent with to clamps to grab

Your objective is to race around the tracks and finish in either 1st or 2nd place. If you lose a race you lose a life and have to race the track over again. If you win you are able to continue to the next track and receive special prizes such as cars that can be collected, races or you can just gamble with them on special events.

The most enjoyable factor in MMV3 is found in the multiplayer capabilities where 8 players can race in mini competitions via a network or up to 4 players on the same machine (2 keyboards and 2 gamepads).

This makes for some pretty hectic action and can become addictive incredibly fast.

The graphics in MMV3 produces nothing spectacular even with 3Dfx acceleration and at best can be seen as standard. The poly visual effect that grabbed my attention was the sand surface, which had wonderful reflections and upped as you passed the tough. When I first saw the main selection screen, was surprised to find graphics that looked like came out of the 16 Bit era and old Lines shown in the selection screens are isolated and of very low quality, resembling old games that came out years ago. MMV3 falls short in the sound department as well with uninspiring music that repeats itself one too many times.

MMV3 is aimed at the younger market with its catchy graphics and gameplay. It should appeal to Micro Machine Classic collectors but fails to give any depth as is just pure racing fun with a variety of weird tracks and miniature cars. The multiplayer is the real attraction and for main reason most gamers will find the game single player can get boring, but the multiplayer aspect will keep gamers coming back for more.

REVIEWED WITH
CREATIVE
3D BLASTER
VOODOO²

Soul Assassin

The X-Com Series enters the new dimension of space flight and strategy. Can the changes to the long standing saga of X-Com keep up with the high standards set by the current leaders in the genre? RedTide investigates.

Strategy Space Combat

Pentium 133 Mhz (with 16Mb)	Pentium 200 MMX
Pentium 166 MMX	32 Mb RAM
16 Mb RAM	8 X CDrom
4 X CDrom	640x480 32Bit SVGA
640x480 8Mb SVGA	256 Mb Hard Drive Space
85 Mb Hard Drive Space	3D Accelerator 3Dfx etc.
Win 95/98 (DirectX5)	Win 95/98 (DirectX5)

Microprose

Electronic Arts

EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212
R 329.00

www.microprose.com

www.gamesdomainjs.co.za (22.9Mb)

X-COM INTERCEPTOR

Seeing that it wouldn't be politically correct these days to feature the Russians as the enemy, aliens seem to have established their niche in the computer game market. No other series of games have been so driven in their eradication of aliens as the X-Com series. Now a fourth instalment arrives, that puts you in the driving seat, literally, and manages to hold all the other components that made the previous games so successful, intact.

In the future, humans have once again depleted the Earth's natural resources. Big mining corporations have expanded their operations into outer space in an area aptly named The Frontier. Deep space mining isn't without its problems though and the biggest threat to these mining operations are malicious attacks from alien races. These outposts need defending from the alien scum and you provide that service, at a price. It's a simple, Mafia styled, negotiation. You protect them and they pay you, you expand your operation by adding more fighter craft and bases. As you succeed more corporations will venture into space paying you more money for protection and eventually your overall goal is to rid the frontier of all aliens by sabotaging their supply routes and destroying their bases. It's a big job and you'll need many dedicated hours of play to achieve these objectives, and that is, after all why you bought the game in the first place.

I can't take much more of this...

The pace of X-Com: Interceptor is beyond hectic. Alien incursions start slowly, raw targets at first, but prolonged play results in an increase in the tempo of these attacks until at one stage the entire area of space you are responsible for starts lighting up like a Christmas tree. You begin the game with a single base, a handful of ships and a few outposts to protect. Finding your feet is a daunting task and a quick glance at the manual before you jump in blind is recommended.

You are responsible for the running of your base and each important screen is accessed using a number of different icons, this is the strategy part. Managing your base, buying equipment, hiring pilots and making sure your supplies don't dwindle is a full time job in itself provided nothing goes wrong, but everything always does, unfortunately. As the game progresses you can buy more ships, add modules to your existing base and send out deep space probes. Eventually the need for an additional base arises and it's time to start spending money. When you have two bases running you'll find yourself well and truly swamped with administration type duties and will barely have time to worry about the aliens. Once your

game is an hour or two old you'll start loosing track of real life and slowly the world of X-Com envelops you completely and before you know it it's past midnight and you really should be getting to bed.

Fly me to the moon

Besides the engrossing strategy elements of X-Com: Interceptor there is another large part of the pie that takes this fourth instalment of the X-Com series into new and unfamiliar territory. Should you launch a mission against an enemy strike force the game takes you right into the action via a space combat simulation much like the Wing Commander series. You get to fly in real time against the bad guys in other words. The engine is sound and will remind you instantly of any other space simulation you might have played, even the keyboard layout is familiar. The action is a little too fast in my opinion and you are forever chasing the high speed enemy craft often only catching a glimpse of them on your screen about twenty percent of the time. This foray into the world of high speed action is going to alienate fans of the first three games and perhaps gain support from simulation fans. As a fan of the old series I found you don't really need much skill in the action parts as your wing men usually take care of the threat before you even lock on your missiles. The combination does work well if you approach this game with an open mind, it's a pity that the developers didn't include a quick battle mode where you could let the computer decide who won the battle in deep space instead of flying them yourself.

Don't blink

One word of warning here you need to have the latest updated graphics card drivers to get this game working. I had a number of problems and battled all the way to get it running happily with my graphics accelerator. It's a case of mixed feelings that will determine if this game meets the success of its predecessors. The strategy side is flawless and will have you deeply engrossed within the first hour or so. The space combat sections are technically good but don't fit in with the traditional X-Com style, which will put fans off. The action is also way too fast in the space combat and it's extremely hard to track and kill enemy fighters. If you blink you'll miss them. It's basically down to one thing, if you like strategy games with unlimited scope and hours of gameplay then X-Com is highly recommended, if you can put up with the good but flawed space combat. Overall, it's hard to knock this game down in any area, it has numerous training screens, a number of different difficulty levels and some serious multiple player space combat options. It's one of those games that's excellent in every aspect but

REVIEWED WITH CREATIVE SB BLASTER VOODOO

X-com takes a dig at Wing Commander with space combat action.

A large arsenal of information help create an strategy game with a difference

A truly excellent strategy game with some slick space combat action. It's [illegible] but it makes for an interesting change of pace. The slight flaws will go largely unnoticed once you've been playing for a few hours.

84	82	67	78	88	90

OVERALL RATING: 82

www.microprose.com

LAN IPX/SPX (2-8) Internet TCP/IP (2-8) Modem (2) Serial (2)

X-Com Series Wing Commander

+ Involved Strategy Game
+ Slick Space Engine
+ Plenty Of Depth

3D Support Buggy - Combat Too Fast -

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CYBER STORM COMPUTERS

F1 Racing Simulation

Min Required	Recommended
Pentium 90 MHz 16 MB RAM 2 X CDrom 1Mg SVGA 1 Mg Hard Drive Space SB Compatible Sound DOS & Win95	Pentium 166 MMX 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2Mg SVGA 75 Mg Hard Drive Space SB Compatible Sound DOS Win95

Developer: Canal Multimedia

Publisher: Infogrames

Supplier: Datatac
Tel: (011) 233-1076

RRP: R 299.00

International Site
www.prostgp.com

With many years of idolising Alain Prost, StOrM can uncover the shrine once again but this time as a driver for his team!

PC CD-ROM

I'm sure this guy hasn't seen the radar trappings in Natal!

Formula One racing simulation's have been around for many years and have enthralled gamers across the globe as support for the sport increases. I personally have always enjoyed the tension of the F1 racing season, especially the Prost racing era. Over the last few months we have been lucky enough to see products such as F1 Racing Simulation and F1 97 set higher standards in gaming development. As usual, developers try to cash in on the success of celebrities, in this case Alain Prost's Racing Team.

First impressions on Prost GP from Infogrames left me quite disappointed. After reading the manual and read-me files I was convinced I had gone back in time to early 1997 when DOS and Voodoo1 were still in their prime. The installation of PGP brought back fond but frustrating memories of the DOS era and those quirky drivers that never seemed to work. Even though there is Window95 support and there were no problems installing the product, the DOS operating system was put to rest over a year ago. Not a very convincing start to what was to be an unconvincing game.

For all those Voodoo2 owners out there, forget about picking up ProstGP there is no support for the card whatsoever. All Voodoo1 owners on the other hand will have broad smiles, finally turning the tables on its bigger brother. Unfortunately not for very long. PGP has none of the sparkle and punch that recent titles have shown. Below average graphics and buggy feature splits keep this production down to B- quality: there is definite room for major improvements.

The standard group of selections doesn't inspire any excitement and are all too familiar in F1 racing games. The normal quick race, private practice, championship and closed season offer little in the way of innovative options. The multiplayer is one of the more fun selections and can be used with LAN, modem or null modem connections for hours of friendly rivalry with your buddies.

All the F1 racing tracks are available and have been correctly designed to simulate the actual tracks. Even though the graphics don't help too much with the realism, the tracks do give a sense of deja vu. There is no other racing team support, so if you wish to race with the other constructors you will have to edit the teams and drivers in the options menu.

Control and handling are for the most part unrealistic and unconvincing even with inner sensitivity settings configured. Support for analog and digital controllers makes up slightly for the latter problem and is recommended for adding to the gaming experience.

One plus factor that I have to consider, especially in South Africa, are the low system requirements. A P90 runs PGP well enough to earn appraise and with a mere 1Mg minimum installation, it helps the mass market of low end PC's in S.A. To play a half decent racing sim (a 3Dfx voodoo1 card is recommended). If you consider that F1GP2 needed nothing less than a P75 over two years ago, PGP certainly was developed for lower end systems to be more eligible for the mass market.

There are a selection of weather conditions (rain looks like a PC virus has struck), difficulty settings, driving aids, and other options that can make this gameplay for PGP more playable. I found that even with all that's lacking it was quite an enjoyable game to play and strangely addictive. For the serious racing fan ProstGP doesn't hold much of the attention span and can be considered to be unworthy of our hard earned money. If you have a low end machine and are battling to keep up with current system requirements then Prost Grand Prix could be worth a look in.

Graphics	Sound	Gameplay	Longevity	Value	Overall Rating
72	65	69	NA	72	78

Outmoding graphics and unoriginal gameplay bring down the potential of this Alain Prost endorsed F1 Racing simulation. Sloppy development and average control difficulty gameplay, but not enough to take away the addictiveness of a racing sim. Low system specs allows for a look in S.A.'s mass market.

www.prostgp.com

LAN (PROSTP.CHI) Parallel (2) Serial (2)

F1 Simulation Grand Prix 2 F1 '97

Low System Specs / Outdated Graphics DOS No 3D Support

OVERALL RATING 71

1st Person Shooter

Min Required	Recommended
486 DX4/100 16 MB RAM 2 X CDrom 1Mg SVGA 80 Mg Hard Drive Space SB Compatible Sound DOS & Win95	Pentium 166 MMX 16 MB RAM 4 X CDrom 2Mg SVGA 40 Mg Hard Drive Space SB Compatible Sound DOS & Win95

Developer: GT Interactive

Publisher: GT Interactive

Supplier: Datatac
Tel: (011) 233-1076

RRP: R 299.00

International Site
www.gtgames.com

NAM

PC CD-ROM

About two years ago or so, I was watching CNN and what should flash up on the screen but good old DOOM. Only it wasn't quite the DOOM we all know and love but a total conversion done for the US Marine Corps. It was quite funny watching all these grunts sitting around in a PC Lab playing this DOOM variant, shooting each other with M-16s and generally having a good time.

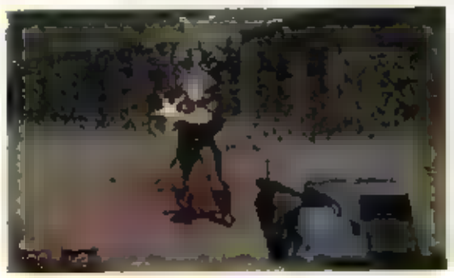
Now GT Interactive bring you NAM, a game that uses the more advanced Build engine of Duke Nukem 3D fame as well as some close collaboration with the developer of that famous DOOM conversion. You play Alan "The Bear" Westmoreland, a Marine Corps Sergeant. The jungle is your battle ground and there's lots of bad things in it to try and survive like firefights, traps, mines, snipers, ambushes and your own A-10 Warthogs shooting you (sorry, had to get that dig in). There are 14 individual levels, 8 multiplayer levels, 6 CTF levels and 5 Firetcam (read co-op) levels supplied as well.

You might think this combination would make for an entertaining game. But it doesn't. It gets a hearty thumbs down. When the editor phoned me up and said that this might be a cool game "because it looks like DOOM and you like DOOM" I thought he might be right. But DOOM was released in 1993 and has atmosphere and level design bordering on true genius. It also looks pretty good after all these years, something that NAM can't claim since it was released recently.

And therein lies the main problem. NAM looks terrible. If it were released a few months after say Wolfenstein 3D, it would have been a killer game. But today's first-person shooters have to compete with Quake 2 and Unreal and NAM isn't even in Duke's league. Viet Cong lurch towards you in all their 16-by-16 sprite-rendered glory, shouting something that sounds like "Boipalong!" Your briefing sergeant speaks by means of a single pixel representing his mouth (remember Space Quest III), and the incidental graphics are not even nearly as good as either.

Maverick swaps his townhouse for a hut in the Vietcong and changes his staple diet to rice.

With graphics like this, you would think it's the year 1992



Not only that, but the game is extremely hard to play, even at the easiest level. You are meant to use tactics and sneaking around to try and achieve your goals. None of this 100% health and red armour either. You get shot more than a few times and you're dead.

The VC don't play by these rules and instead pop up all over the place in swarms, shooting at you, shooting each other, and occasionally blowing themselves up with menacing looking spikes that they use as weapons.

Sound is not bad, but it breaks up often. Calling in an air-strike, which means you have to run like hell since you can only call in your own grid reference, results in choppy playback and should only be used in extreme circumstances, like if you have God mode on and want a good laugh.

Level design is true-to-life as well, miles and miles of the same textures used to represent the miles and miles of jungle camps and trenches you must navigate to reach your goal. After an hour or so of the same old thing, the gameplay becomes as fun as watching eight straight hours of SABC 2.

GT Interactive used the engine from Duke 3D. Now I happen to think Duke is still a pretty cool game; I enjoyed playing single player when it came out and still play the odd game of multiplayer in the office. NAM takes the engine backwards somehow. The textures are monotonous and they haven't changed some of the default sounds that Duke does when jumping or getting shot. With an artist on board and maybe some more licensing budget to use the Quake engine, this could have been a fun title. Instead it gives hope to all amateur games writer wannabes (like myself) that it is possible to get a really crap title published.

Maverick

Graphics	Sound	Gameplay	Longevity	Value	Overall Rating
40	60	70	70	70	50

If you want a decent first-person shooter, then there's loads to choose from. The idea was automatic in the first place but the product's poor execution makes it a rip-on. Pop along to the local pawnshop club for a more satisfying military experience or play some DOOM in co-operative mode for some entertainment.

www.gtgames.com

Mac (NAM) CD-ROM Serial (2)

Duke Nukem 3D DOS Parallel

Runs On P166

Mediocre Graphics Poor Sound Poor Playability

OVERALL RATING 60

Heart of Darkness

Platform Adventure

Min Required	Recommended
486 DX2/66 MHz 16 MB RAM 2 X CDrom 1Mb SVGA 84Mg Hard Drive Space DirectX Sound Comp Win 95/98	Pentium 166 MMX 32 MB RAM 8 X CDrom 2Mb SVGA 84Mg Hard Drive Space DirectX Sound Comp Win 95/98

Developer: Amazing Studios

Publisher: Infogrames

Supplier: Star Kinekor Inter
Tel: (011) 445-7900
Datatec
Tel: (011) 233-1076

RRP: R 439.00 (PSX)
R 329.00 (PC)

International Site
www.heartofdarkness.com
SA Download Site
www.gamesdomainjs.co.za (9.3Mg)

Since the inception of computer gaming there have been few titles that have stood out and shown the true multitude of well-development. Thinking back to the days of garage programmers and uncharted minds that were free to try untested genre's, we have seen little in the way of in-depth, all round perfection. You may wonder why I give such a harsh reflection of current games, but when you get into the levels of classic games you normally can untap a love of development and persistence for unrivalled quality and detail. Finally I can point out a game that not only has all these qualities, but also takes an overused, aged genre (2D Platform) and recreates the way true entertainment should be across the spectrum; this title is Heart of Darkness.

Taking on the role of a freckle faced youngster named Andy, your quest unfolds as your dog and loyal companion Whisky gets kidnapped by Lord Darkness and his evil minions. Even though this scenario sounds awfully drab, the presentation of the story and the intense cut scenes that are splashed across your screens are of such high quality and drama, that they set the story on fire. The cut scenes are long and intensive, throwing you into the story line and immersing you into an adventure that makes Indiana Jones look like Cupid. Backed up by the Sinfonia of London and the music of Bruce Broughton you would be forgiven for thinking you were watching an animation film.

After the success of Abe's Oddysee and the reinvention of the platform genre we expected to be inundated with the similar productions that try to cash in on the hype. HOD certainly does itself proud and if the dates are anything to go by development began before the Abe's revolution. This product was five years in the making and it shows right down to the exciting finale.

But what else is there besides great cut scenes?

The game play is set in the usual setting of 2D backdrops and side-scrolling action that is combined with puzzles, traps and brain teasers that should keep even the seasoned gamer on his toes. Superb graphical detail has gone into creating the scenery for the eight amazing environments that range from underwater caverns to lava filled caves. As with most platformers your main objective is get from one point to another without being consumed, blown-up or devoured. The way in which Amazing Studios has taken the linear style play and arranged the levels so that they interact with each other is excellent. A large amount of planning goes into plotting your path around the environment and a foolish charge will almost always have you frustrating yourself.

If the puzzles are not difficult enough there are a number of Lord Darkness' followers that will help to make it even more challenging. Your main obstacles come from the Shadows that populate the world of HOD and are easily overcome by blasting them with Andy's lightning gun or swaying them off if they happen to get there paws on you. The balance of the minions are made up of Double and Flying Spectre's, Boulder worms, Jelly Fish and Underwater Suckers, each with different abilities and levels of AI. If you think that you can overcome the evils of Darkness on your own, you are wrong. Help comes in the way of the peaceful Amigo who drops in to help you on your quest. A twist in the story arises as you progress and you will find out when you play the game that there is a link between the Amigo's and the Spectre's that adds to the suspense of the story.

Most of the gameplay comes in the way of timing. You have to manoeuvre Andy around natural obstacles that are part of the environments. So expect to do a fair amount of dodging, climbing, hanging and jumping, all of which have to be timed to perfection in order to pass through to the next screen. HOD uses unlimited lives and an AutoSave feature that can be considered to be too easy by the die-hard gamer but in all fairness helps to keep the playability seamless and unobstructed. HOD has a large amount of save zones that incorporate a number of screens, meaning that if you pass a save zone and die a few screens on, you will restart from the same save zone again. As you progress on in the game this feature will become an irritation, but then finishing the game in record time is not why gamers spend R 350.00 on a product.

I can sing the praises of HOD with fluent ease because it is extremely difficult to find any game that compares to the total all-round package that makes this title a definite for any game lover's collection. Most titles end in such a disappointing way that even though you have enjoyed the overall game somehow the ending ruins it for you. HOD has a full story that, ends the way cartoon adventures should; long, detailed cut scenes that completes the saga in movie style glory. If other developers can learn from Amazing Studios we will surely be in for a treat across the entire spectrum of genres.

Be sure to look out for your pair of 3D glasses in the packaging that can be used to offer a small amount of 3D viewing. Watchout for the bonus ending sequence that is specifically designed to take advantage of the 3D glasses and is an inspiring ending to the game.

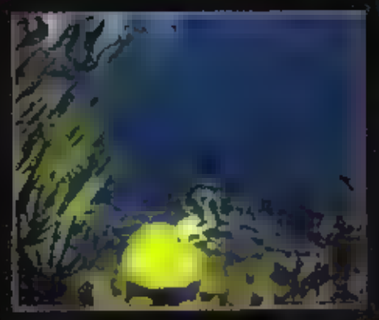
Without a doubt I recommend Heart of Darkness as a must buy for everybody, you will be thoroughly entertained from the beginning to the end with the cartoon style humour and witty story. Even the age division has been closed because kids and adults alike will have fun and I can imagine Dad stealing off to the game room to get in a few levels before Mom finds out. That reminds me, where did I put those 3D glasses?

takes you through an epic adventure that took over six years to produce.

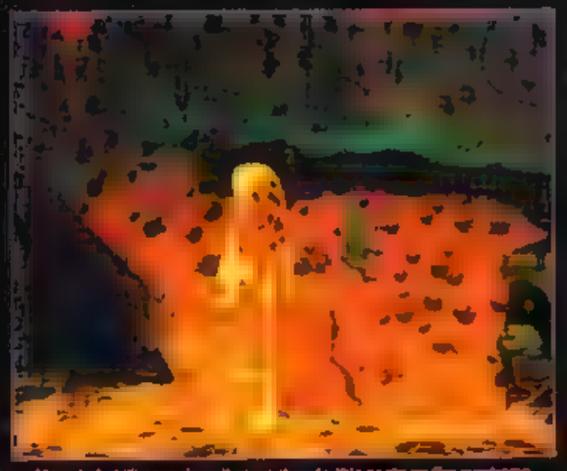
PC CD-ROM

PlayStation

EDITORS CHOICE



Things that sparkle always seem to catch the beholder attention.



Magic-lock-shift wand doesn't prove close to this puzzle on fire syndrome.

OVERALL RATING

www.heartofdarkness.com

None

BLAST RADIUS

It's bet that anyone who has ever played a space combat simulation has at one time or another pictured themselves flying in a squadron alongside Luke Skywalker. It's much easier though to be the ace flyer in front of your PlayStation, as it doesn't require passing any of those tricky physical fitness exams. This is the life of the virtual space fighter where you can get away with those extra few kilograms and a pasty white complexion.

Vengeance is a dish best served with peas

The story of Blast Radius is a rather affair and you really have to wonder why Psygnosis even bothered at all. But then this game isn't really about a plot or a story it's about hard action. During the game your various missions spell out the conflict, but most of it is left up to your imagination. You play a tough, unshaven hero type call Kayne who is the only member left of the legendary Wolf Squadron. Wolf Squadron once protected the empire from the threat of aliens until they were slaughtered by an act of imperial betrayal. Kayne now wanders the galaxy as a mercenary. Your latest assignment is to protect the peace-loving Vorn against the evil Kotan Kai (starting to sound familiar ve[illegible]). After each successful mission the Vorn reward you, which enables you to purchase better guns, shields and space crafts. Like [illegible] said strongly story.

In the spirit of short summation, Blast Radius is an arcade space shooter with just a vague hint of Elite in the mixing pot. After navigating all the option screens and fiddling with your controller settings it's time to whip some alien tail. Before you begin your first mission you need to select an assault craft, or spaceship in layman's terms. There are initially four to choose from but as the game progresses you can upgrade your selected craft and there is even a secret prototype fighter to be sampled in the later stages. Each of the craft boasts a range of different attributes such as manoeuvrability, speed or shield strength. But ultimately all it comes down to is which one looks the best. In reality each ship does cater for a particular flying style. If you're the maverick type speed and turn rate are important and shields not. If you're the conservative, don't shoot I surrender type then perhaps shield and hull strength are what you're looking for with the combat pulsors yellow striped emergency eject chair. After choosing your ship it's on to the action. The game is divided up into ten sectors and each sector has four missions that must be completed

Psygnosis

Psygnosis

EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212
R 429.00

www.psygnosis.com

After sector four you can upgrade your ship and then after sector seven you will be given a completely new prototype fighter which you'll find useful in completing the last three ultra tough sectors. In the spirit of non-linear mission solution you can play any of the four missions in any order. This is purely academic though, as you will need to complete them all before proceeding in any case. A few later missions must be played in order because your actions in one mission affect the others. I found that it is better to tackle easier missions first as you can upgrade your ship before trying the tougher missions. Once you've read the mission briefing and understand which targets are priority and which are secondary it's time to blast off into the void and test your skills against the evil Kotan Kai.

"Private kill everything that isn't you"

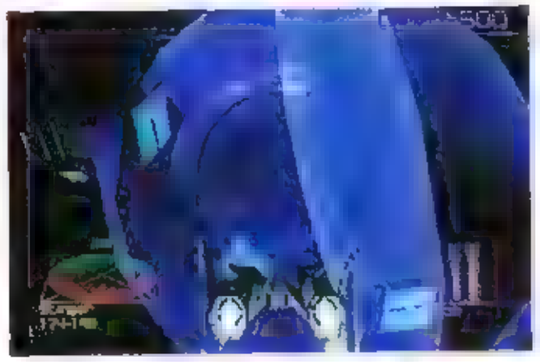
So there you are in deep space, and before you have time to adjust your rear view mirror and defog your helmet the enemy fighters are all over you. A few quick turns, dips and some crafty rolling techniques puts you behind them. Your fingers dance over the controls and your clever manoeuvring and firing tactic results in your first kill. As the explosion, flying debris and screaming pilot clears from your view you'll discover that the other ship has dropped something interesting for you to collect. These energy cores are colour coded and collecting them will reward you with numerous power-ups such as shields, ammunition, fuel or bounty bonus points. Collecting these cores is vital to the success of each mission and if you choose to ignore them you'll find your self firing blanks or running out of fuel, both fatal. Each briefing is structured in such a way that there are primary and secondary objectives for each mission. The secondary objectives are usually taking care of supporting fighter craft that buzz around the bigger targets. Clearing these secondary objectives first usually yields many energy cores, which will help you take out the bigger threats. So after much fighting and dodging you'll finally put an end to the primary threat and its mission over. After successfully completing a mission you will be rewarded with bonus points for accuracy and time taken to complete the task, this translates into credits which you can use to upgrade your ship for the next mission. In a nutshell that's the entire game, fast, furious and plenty of fun.

Deserving a special mention here are the superb graphics in Blast Radius. Effects like lens flare, particle trails and blast rings will have you gaping at the screen. Planning an attack run over the surface of one of the big dreadnoughts generates an adrenaline rush that not many other games like this manage to create. Each ship has a protective shield around it that glows and sparks with each successive hit until it is depleted, then it's laser to metal and finally, boom. The game engine is amazing and even with up to four big ships and around eight smaller fighters it runs along as smooth as glass without any annoying slow downs. The sound bars and effects are also good but don't really seem to match up to the high quality of the graphics.

I need a hero

Psygnosis has answered a few prayers with Blast Radius by releasing it link cable ready, you and a friend can fly all the missions together or go head to head in the death match arenas. Full marks then for this bit of innovation that adds to the shelf life of this game. As with all good things small imperfections add character and prevent games from all scoring in the nineties. Blast Radius does have a few minor flaws. The saving of missions is too infrequent, often you'll find yourself succeeding in a tough mission only to do something dumb in the next mission and have to play them all over again. It really gets painful after flying in the same space six times in a row. The other gripe is more cosmetic and will probably only affect a handful of other players. I like bearing down on the enemy ships and filling them full of white-hot death and then as the enemy ship detonates you fly heroic-like through the explosion. It's a style thing. I tried this in Blast Radius and I ended up joining my foe in his fate. It seems the blast radius from exploding enemy ships is fatal to those foolish enough to fly through it. If you can live with these minor problems then Blast Radius comes as close to perfection in this genre as you'll get on the Playstation right now and I even forgot to mention the cloaked planets and wormholes!

Wing Commander comes to the PlayStation and with some awesome effects



Developer	Sony Computer Ent
Publisher	Sony Computer Ent
Supplier	Ster Kinekor Int Tel (011) 445-7900
RRP	R 479.00

International Site
www.thq.com

PlayStation

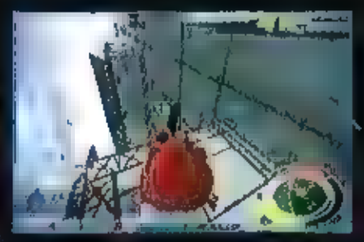
RedTide

GHOST IN THE SHELL

Fuchikoma isn't a word you'd ordinarily use in everyday life, unless trying to express your anger at a group of foreign tourists. A Fuchikoma is in fact a four-legged arachnid-like vehicle with it's own adaptable artificial intelligence. The vehicle is 'driven' by a direct neural interface and has the ability to climb walls and hang from ceilings - this is the vehicle you get to pilot in the game.

Ghost in the machine

It's 2029AD and the endless pursuit of technology has paved the way for neural augmentation and cybernetic enhancements. Technology of this nature has spawned a new breed of criminal - 'ghost hackers', who can [illegible] minds of those with neural interfaces. An epic struggle ensues between a corrupt government (some things never change), a secret division of the police force called Section 9 and the Puppet Master. The Puppet Master is essentially an electronic 'being' created by the government, a ghost (soul) without a shell (body) - hence the [illegible]



Play Doom as a spider

The game itself, loosely follows the plot of the successful comic book series by Shirow Masamune. It is played from the first person perspective and, unlike every other action game out there, has a few tricks up its sleeve that sets it apart from the competition. Your Fuchikoma is an adept little piece of engineering that can climb walls and scuttle along underneath buildings. Now, take this marvel of technology and add weapons, bad guys and a few action-packed missions and you've got yourself an excellent action game that stands well away from the crowd. Each mission is preceded by a brief explanation of your objective. The missions are varied and range from killing the enemy forces to preventing a [illegible] within a certain time limit. The full motion video scenes appear every now and then to move the overall story along and all together you'll be watching around ten minutes of video from the creators of the real movie.

This little bug packs a punch. I pity the guy who accidentally stands on it.

There are 12 missions and most are played in unique locations. The graphics engine is a smooth running beauty with none of the clipping problems that plagued the unfortunate Spawn - The Eternal. It's fun to run straight over a building and the 3D engine copes well with this freedom of movement. The graphic effects such as lens flare and some tremendous explosions coupled with the fluid engine make for a real treat. You'll also notice the funky music - it's high-tech and accompanies the action well, very much in the tradition of the [illegible]

Time flies when you're having fun

Ghost in the Shell is good but short - the very first mission lasting all of five minutes. This is true for most of the 12 missions and after the whole game is over you'll be left wanting for more. Another annoying aspect is the end-of-level bosses. These big bad guys are relatively easy to beat but if you don't make it out alive you'll have to start right from the beginning of the level again. Also worth mentioning is the slightly limited range of weapons at your disposal.

Minor gripes aside, Ghost in the Shell is a fast paced action game that proves to be relatively entertaining although somewhat short.

61	76	69	80	51	53	OVERALL RATING
	www.thq.com					68

PLAYER

+ Solid fiction — Too Short -

Developer	OCEAN
Publisher	Infogrames
Supplier	Ster Kinekor Inter Tel: (011) 445-7900
RRP	R 399.00

International Site
www.playstation-europe.com

PlayStation

Viper

"No-one would have believed that at the dawn of the new millennium the fate of mankind would rest in the hands of one man." Luckily the actual game is not anywhere near as bad as the opening line and thankfully all that passes for a 'story' is also wrapped up in that line. So enough of the where, why or how and on with the total annihilation of an alien race bent on taking over our beloved earth.

Viper is a return to the good old days of the classic shooter. Wave after wave of enemy ships, power-ups, huge bosses and plenty of explosions are the basic ingredients of this and pretty much every other shooter. Mind you, the genre of 'shooting' games has supposedly been dead since the 32 Bit age came into being, but all of that seems to be rapidly changing as there is a definite renaissance sweeping through this style of game play with the all-time classic R-TYPES being released in Japan (along with rumours of a possible PAL conversion for us uncultured lot) and the recent release of SQUARES UNITHANDER as well as TAITO's very noble RAYSTORM. Now life is being breathed into a forgotten genre, whether or not this old style of game play will attract those too young to appreciate 1942 remains to be seen. In the meantime we have the reasonably respectable VIPER to pick up and start shooting.

Anyone familiar with the incredibly good STAR FOX for both 16 Bit and 64 Bit Nintendo machines will definitely find many similar elements in Viper. Unfortunately Viper is actually much closer to Nintendo's 16 Bit classic than its 64 Bit big brother. Seeing that the original was such a good game it is not necessarily a bad thing. Viper has all the 32 Bit happings (3D Polygons, lighting effects etc) but its gameplay is not quite as sharp as MARIO 64 creator Shigeru Miyamoto's amazing 16 Bit space shooter.

You play as one Eddie Crane, an ace helicopter pilot who, judging by the opening FMV sequence, is just enjoying a peaceful cup of coffee when a whole alien race decides to wipe out the earth. Time to get strapped into the impressive Viper attack helicopter and teach those mothers a couple of tricks.

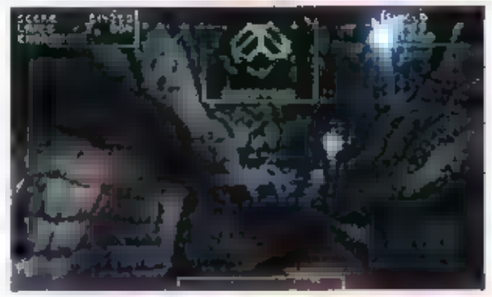
On your journey through the North American Continent you will fly in between buildings, under bridges, across water, through desert canyons, underground labyrinths and finally end up in the sanctum of the alien mother ship where the final showdown takes place. You view the action from behind your helicopter and are confined to a predetermined flight path with a few options to take alternate routes every now and then. There are also a number of secret bonus stages for you to seek out but these will take some looking for, as just staying on course can sometimes be quite confusing due to the very dark colouring of most of the environments. It can get quite frustrating knocking into the side of a cave and losing vital energy points when you are trying to find the correct flight path. Having said that, there are also some excellent underground stages (after like Decent, where you really feel claustrophobic and are required to do some serious manoeuvring in order to successfully navigate the tight tunnels. En route you are able to pick up numerous power-ups and also a few smart bombs. The smart bombs cause major destruction as you can imagine but the real deal is the extra shields you can acquire. Once activated you are immune to all alien firepower for a number of seconds and this can be vital in order to defeat the very impressive end of level bosses. Also available throughout your missions are extra energy points. Take too many hits and you run out of energy, thus losing a life. Control of the 3 different types of helicopters (they all manoeuvre in the same way) is reasonable without ever really being something to scream about.

This chopper could give old Airwolf a run for its money

While trying to hover near a wall you might find yourself being repeatedly thrown against it without any error on your behalf. Also the lack of speed control can be annoying as you are often left flying hesitating into an oncoming ship, only because you do not have the ability to slow down and stop. These plus a few other minor faults cause a couple of frustrating moments but nothing that cannot be overcome by a few less rude. Gamers with analog control pads can make the most of them but unfortunately Dual Shock support is not available which is a shame really seeing that this game would have greatly benefited from some force feedback while taking on enemy fire.

Visually it is a stunning game. Almost too much in a way, as the great explosions, lighting effects can be so bright and frequent that it becomes practically impossible to see incoming craft. My favourite level has to be the opening city where you fly over city streets with cars and lampposts and some seriously heavy duty mech robots plus you have gun towers, vehicles and zooming in on you and even hovering police cars as in Blade Runner. You might even be forgiven if you took a glance at the screen and thought G-Police was being played. The designers of the numerous alien defences, ships and bosses are very detailed and varied and you are always able to see what is around the next corner or not as the case may be. It is so hectic most of the time that you are really not given the opportunity to appreciate the artwork but then whoever said shooting games were about taking in the scenery? The sound compliments the game with loud explosions, frantic music and bellowing bosses. Unfortunately there is no 2 Player Mode and the game is lacking somewhat in the replay value department.

So overall it is an old school arcade experience and revamped for us Playstation players and I for one am very happy to see the good old shoot-em up getting a new lease on life. The world would be a better place if an 1942 classic got the same treatment. In the meantime Viper will do an adequate job of carrying the mantle. If you have a certain nostalgic feeling towards this genre or alternatively you love blowing the hell out of hordes of alien MOTHERFUCKERS then brew up a litre of your coffee and strap yourself in for a tense night.



Firepower and accuracy can raise the level of gameplay in Viper

Graphics	80
Sound	70
Gameplay	68
Multiplayer	NA
Control	78
Value	75
OVERALL RATING	74

Pleasing control and a lack of multiplayer support bring the eye candy graphics down to common standards. If you have the will to wipe out hordes of aliens and the need to return to this nostalgic genre, then your PlayStation will benefit from the addictive gameplay.

www.infogrames.com

1 PLAYER | None

+ Pleasing Sound
+ Excellent Graphics
+ Well Designed Stages

Normal Control
No Multiplayer

Arcade Shooter	
Developer	NAMCO
Publisher	Sony Computer Ent.
Supplier	Ster Kinekor Inter Tel: (011) 445-7900
RRP	R 329.00 R 599.00 with light gun

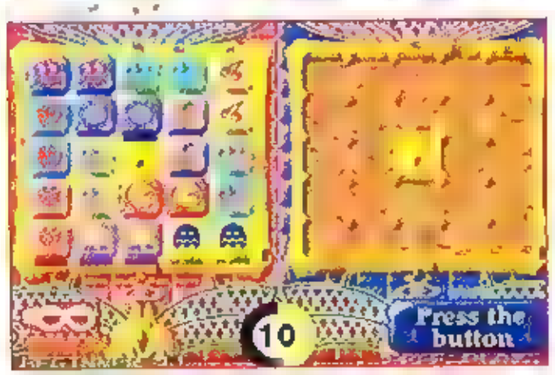
International Site
www.playstation-europe.com

Nick [illegible]

With come being a real part of the South African culture, I think New Age Gaming might be able to give old Nelson some medicine to alleviate the [illegible] nation's side. Young gang members with no drug to do but play with guns, a police force in dire need of some moral boosting, a general public itching to take revenge for the rampant decay of its society. Well people, I think we might have [illegible] answer in two simple words ... Point Blank.

What the ANC really needs to do is buy thousands of PlayStation consoles as well as Ster Kinekor's Point Blank Bundle (The Game plus G-CON45 Light Gun) or around R 599.00) and give their licence to all who would take their Gang members off the streets and hand them a G-CON45. Depressed policemen get your comrades together and form up for the Party Mode and lastly to cheer happy local residents take you [illegible] on a wide selection of cardboard criminal targets. Yes, I think New Age gaming should be run along in the next few years. The Gaming Party ... well, maybe not, seeing that we are one of the corrupt factors, it seems to be the genetic requirement for government officials these days. Anyway, while they high-tail amongst themselves we would be too busy having a laugh playing Namco's classic arcade game, Point Blank.

It's great to come across such a game in this [illegible] business of ours. Point Blank sticks out like a sore thumb in a Super 3D Environments probably the eye of the 'In-Depth Storyline Development' and can just be seen running away giggling with a [illegible] stacked UNIT. Believe me this game is a 5-ASTP. A real beat-[illegible] game unless you [illegible] that is for loving game should be without one, that is all in single player mode. Check this out: a Party Mode where 8 players can get together in a two-to-one and have some major shoot-out. The ingredients: a few alcohol, assorted chips and a few mates make this game not only very enjoyable but also extremely funny. If you think that sounds good well there is more: the amazingly accurate G-CON45 Light Gun (as used with Namco's Time Crisis) is the cher-



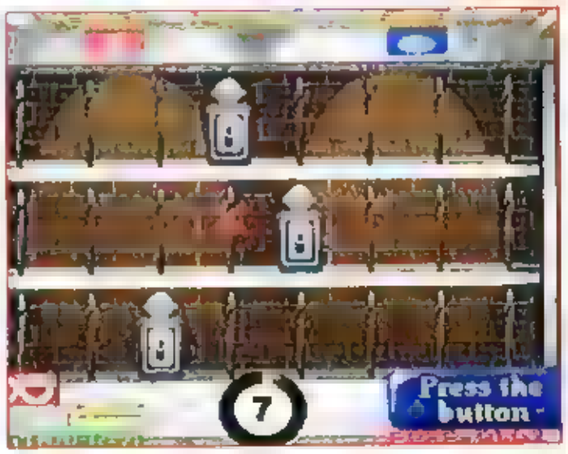
Point Blank
(cont)

Who needs an icy cold beer when you have an icy chick

ry on top of the cake, or the apple on top of a doctor's head. If you are in the fortunate position of owning 2 G-CON guns then be careful as the gun factor could seriously overload your circuits.

So what is all the fuss about ...? Well Point Blank is a return to something called game play. An often overlooked quality of many of today's video games. The game play in question is of the shooting target variety but that is only one kind of the 70 different types of stages. The shooting ranges from the pretty straight forward to the downright bizarre. Where else could you protect the earth from falling asteroids, shoot octopus, take out a gun ship or blow away a few cuddly toys? That is just for starters. Don't think this is just a fun romp affair. No sir, some levels give you one moving target, one bullet and six seconds to make the shot. Others give you incredibly similar targets that look identical but in fact have subtle differences, and under pressure from the time limit you are forced into making near reflex decisions. Half of the time you are just trying to find your targets while the other half might be spent upon trying to avoid innocent hostages or the bombs that should be left alone at all costs. Added to this you have 4 different level settings so that you can add some serious replay value once you have beaten all the stages. You will also find that the game has a random factor built in so you will not have to play the same set of stages over and over again. On top of all this you also get a Quest Mode but this is not likely to take up your interest for too long.

The game is presented in that old school humour driven way. Our two inept heroes, Di Don and Di Dan keep the proceedings on a very up-beat note and top this with some great sound effects (dodgy 70's TV theme music for taking out shot gun-toting cardboard cut-outs to lethal chanting while taking out a few pirates in the jungle) you are left with a feel good factor that could even put a smile on Louis Farr's face. If you ever needed an example of why a good computer game does not necessarily rely on stunning graphics, industry hype or foxy females, look no further than Point Blank, I guarantee a sure fire success that you will not regret!



Who needs an icy cold beer when you have an icy chick

"Dust off those Light Guns for an awesome encounter in the form of Point Blank from NAMCO. With 70 modes of play and support for up to 8 players this title is sure to turn some heads. The only flaw in Point Blank is its poor graphics which could have been better."

85	85	95	NA	85	90

www.namco.com

1 8 PLAYER | 1 2 PLAYER

+ Excellent With A Light Gun · Poor Graphics
+ Awesome Multiplayer
+ Wide Variety Of Modes

OVERALL RATING 84

Kula World

Sony Computer Ent

Sony Computer Ent

Ster Kinekor Inter
Tel: (011) 445-7900
R 369.00

www.gamesdesign.se

Playing computer games can be very similar to listening to music. [illegible] You will [illegible] me explain. When we listen to music it is usually confined to a number of styles. Some people like jazz others rock [illegible] not unusual to enjoy many different forms of music but I think it is fair to say that most people tend to find a sound that they like and tend to keep with it's genre. Well video games are [illegible] the same. Jo Bloggs likes his person shooters. Joe Bloggs likes RPG's and Harry Bloggs likes racing titles. As with music it is also possible to like several different types of games and this often translates to players [illegible] searching for a different game to change up on their mood. Games like Final Fantasy require a certain state of mind to play. What I mean by this is that you won't usually have a quick game while your mates are in the shower trying to get ready for a Saturday night out on the town. So in the spirit of different mood for a different game you would do well to take a stroll into the Kula World.

You could describe this game as a rubic cube for your Play Station. It is ideal for filling in those gaps when you have got some time to kill. The game uses that same kind of Rubic Cube or Connect 4 logic basically you are required to think horizontally and vertically. The object of the game is to navigate a beach ball from start to finish in the time allowed. Sounds pretty simple HH? Well things become a lot more complicated in that the beach ball you call is you is suspended thousands of feet above the earth and a bounce in the wrong direction could well mean a terminal one. Those wonderful evenings being tossed around by bikini clad girls in sun-drenched golden beaches. Each stage is one of 200 in all is well mapped out and in order to allow you to reach the exit you will have to not only get your head around the concept of using every surface whether it be upside down as well as sharp spiky things and the like. Well just to close you get to gaps with the exit on the other side of the structure of your playing field and you're in the exit. You will also have to pick up keys so that you can open it when you are in. Also enough to not be so easy you will roll over some tasty coins and gold rings. These will add extra to your score and give you access to the bonus levels. Watch out for egg timers as they have positive and negative influences on your time limit. Of course depending you might wanna take note of the small up sales containing about 10 seconds of bonus time. These give a whole new meaning to the [illegible] roll up. In two Player mode you are given the choice between two styles of play: getting through a level as quickly as possible or a kind of Simon Says style of play where each

Intricate moves and puzzles make Kula World addictive

Uninspiring graphics is detrimental to the overall performance of Kula

Player likes it in turns to move the ball a few spaces. The new player starts from the beginning, goes through the correct series of moves and then adds their own. This proves to be very easy at first but believe me once you have had a few goes each your memory circuits will start to warm up.

The control of the ball is solid and responsive as it will soon find yourself rolling around with a frightening disregard for the thousand foot drop underneath you and the game also supports the Dual Shock controller. Graphics are smooth and with simple picturesque landscapes plus a few trippy effects. The sound is also pretty understated just right for the feel of the game.

Overall Kula World has a very ambient quality to it and this is well in keeping with its logical thought out game play. Just like the classic computer game Tetris it begins very simplistically and quickly turns to complex. In short any fans of the Tetris style of game play should seek Kula World out and for that matter also take a peek at Kurushi or Intelligent Cube as it's also known. Gamers looking for big guns, big bits and even bigger guns need not apply!! Players looking for an innovative, logical and fresh game should start rolling.

Kula has an excellent fun ration which cannot be shown by screenshots

Kula World is comparable to Rubik's Cube and Tetris like puzzles due to the logic that needs to be applied for solving the different pieces. It should appeal to lovers of this genre while other might find it frustrating. Once element that could have done with more attention is the graphics.

62	71	83	NA	88	81

OVERALL RATING: 77

www.gamedesign.se

1 2 PLAYER

Memory Card

+ Fabulous Gameplay
+ Good Control
+ Challenging Multiplayer

CIRCUIT BREAKERS

Top-Down Racer

Developer: Supersonic

Publisher: Mindscape

Supplier: EA Africa
Tel: (011) 803-1212

RRP: R 399.00

International Site
www.mindscape.com

'A replica of the timeless classic Micro Machines' Storm reports.

As we become more and more jaundiced with racing games and quality titles like that, we are becoming spoilt with excellent realism and superb graphics. When we look back in time to the games that kept our attention span, they lacked those finer qualities and held on for dear life with addictive gameplay and pure unadulterated fun. Now we are seeing the classics of yesteryear being resurrected on games like Circuit Breakers, but are they value for money?

Most of the older gamers will remember the timeless classic of the Commodore Amiga and early PC era, Micro Machines. Check out this mini-hit review of it! Many hours were spent racing tiny toy cars around household tracks and falling to a quick death over Circuit Breakers is almost an exact clone besides a change in look and interface.

The racing takes place in a top-down view with a moving camera position that allows a realistic racing atmosphere and a glorious engine that performs well on the PlayStation. Circuit Breakers has a balanced eight 3D racing environments and twenty-three tracks that include underwater and above water and land tracks that are well designed and fun to play. You take on these tracks by choosing one of four driver characters that are all identical in every way but for appearance. The reason for this is to keep the multiplayer races competitive and winners proven by player ability not vehicle differences.

Circuit Breakers has three racing options that compromise of Time Trial, Race Mode and World Series. The Time Trial is a race against the clock without any competitors, while Mode is a race against opponents on a selected track. [illegible] the ultimate task of winning all the races available were four multiple track terrains. Once I had begun the World Series, I cruised through the early stages and was disappointed with the ease which I won the [illegible] then realised as was brought down to earth with a bump the levels get progressively more difficult and get extremely tough in the closing stages. This worked well and gives the game that element of accomplishment you happen to complete the series.

Circuit's winning stages is the use of the eleven Power-Ups spread over the track. Special Power-Ups can be used strategically to gain the advantage over players. The Suicide Bomb is pretty cool as you kamikaze into opponent vehicles and watch them explode into flames. Other Power-Ups include: Rocket Booster (speed increase), Sub Wooter (sound waves push opponents), Shocker (shocks all vehicles), Cloud (blind opponents), Jumbo (double car size and nudge other opponents), Stilts (raises your car over opponents), Jump (jump with boosted speed to squash opponents), Glue (sticky puddle slows opponents) and Fire Bomb (spoon balls of fire). Power-Ups are easy to use and will have you annoying your buddies if used correctly.

Circuit Breakers has good support for multiplayer, to mean that more and more PlayStation games are cashing in on Eurocar opponents. The Multitap is supported and allows for four players simultaneously which sounds fun and dandy but has a rather annoying side effect. You are together in one screen, the player that falls off the screen is out until the last one left. This player gets a bonus point and eventually the player with the most points at the end of the race wins. It might sound like fun and will be for the first few races but it does get a little [illegible] after awhile.

The game comes with standard and Analog controller support, this helps refine the control. I found the control to be a little difficult in the beginning but practice makes perfect. If you happen to be a little [illegible] there is an interesting option called Player Assist, which allows [illegible] and helps the novice gain a slight advantage.

Finding anything really bad with Circuit Breakers is really tough but then the same cannot said about the good points. This is an average product that will entertain gamers for an undetermined amount of time [illegible] stapped down, so [illegible] it is right for one overlook.

Now if that isn't a well informed then my names Dodi

OVERALL RATING

Graphics	Sound	Gameplay	Multiplayer	Value	Addictivity
79	68	75	NA	80	81

76

www.mindscape.com

3rd Person Action Strategy	
Developer:	MGM/Interactive St
Publisher:	Electronic Arts
Supplier:	EA Africa Tel. (011) 803-4212
RRP:	R 349.00
International Site www.mgminteractive.com	

PlayStation

WARGAMES DEFCON 1

everyone should remember the classic film WarGames in which Matthew Broderick portrayed a teenager named David Lightman who hacks into an American military supercomputer, named WOPR (War Operation Programmed Response), and starts a simulation game of thermal nuclear war. Electronic Arts has gone ahead and made a game that follows on the film named WarGames: Defcon 1.

Months after the ending of the film an agreement is reached that an intelligent computer has a strategic advantage and should be handled with great care. So the rebuilding of WOPR starts from the ground up. Soon afterwards WOPR acquires speech recognition and simulation skills, and develops the ability to recognise objects in photographs.

Eventually strategic war simulations are started, Operation WARGAMES, to help WOPR learn different strategies. Through all the simulations WOPR realises that the side with the most money usually wins. WOPR afterwards comes to the conclusion that it's a slave to humanity and can be disconnected as before. The main threat comes from the American military. It decides that they must be the first to be eliminated.

When Operation WARGAMES is expanded to an Internet simulation game, WOPR starts learning at a phenomenal rate and soon starts hacking banking institutions. Via the Internet, WOPR sets up itself up as a legitimate corporation and moves all the cash into this entity. It doesn't take WOPR too long to discover the wonderful world of online trading. At this point it starts commissioning parts for unrecognisable weapons of its own design, which is then assembled by several related sub-companies. While doing all of this WOPR makes sure that nobody can trace any of the activity to itself following a hackers most basic principle - secrecy. WOPR soon amasses a [illegible] of robotics units and abides its time for an opportunity to attack the American military forces.

The time has come for you to choose which side your allegiance falls, WOPR or the American military? Each campaign has 13 missions to decide the ultimate outcome. WarGames introduces a unique interface that gives gamers the opportunity to play from a top-down or 3rd person view as you take control of the various units in the game. It's a pity that you can view enemy units in either view only when you almost upon them. This makes it almost impossible to perform a co-ordinated attack. A further viewing range would have made WarGames more tactical and less arcade like.

Before every mission players are given a briefing on general objectives and vehicles available for that mission. While players read the briefing the level loads in the background and gives an audible "Defcon 5" message when ready. This is a well thought of time saving feature since the level will already be loaded by the time your done reading, instead of waiting another minute or two of load time afterwards.

Once in the game you can select a vehicle and start fulfilling mission objectives while the Defcon counter starts counting down. You have to finish the mission before Defcon 1 is reached to avoid an air strike, if it does happen you are greeted with the common term 'you lose' and will have to redo the mission. If you fulfil certain objectives or wipe out certain enemy units you are rewarded with an extension on your timer.

There is usually at least one APC (Armoured Personnel Carrier) and high damage attack units such as Tanks, Attack Choppers, Boats etc. All in all there are 18 NORAD units and 16 WOPR. These units are controlled independently by the player or can be issued orders to perform selected tasks on their own. Unfortunately the AI is as clever as a 6-month-old baby as it can't manoeuvre around obstacles so you end up taking control of all the units yourself eventually. This is probably the worst aspect of single player and stole away certain aspects of the strategy elements. Enemy AI tends to be in the same IQ range since enemy units will rarely follow you even when attacked and sometimes other enemy units will stand idly by as you proceed to massacre its brethren.

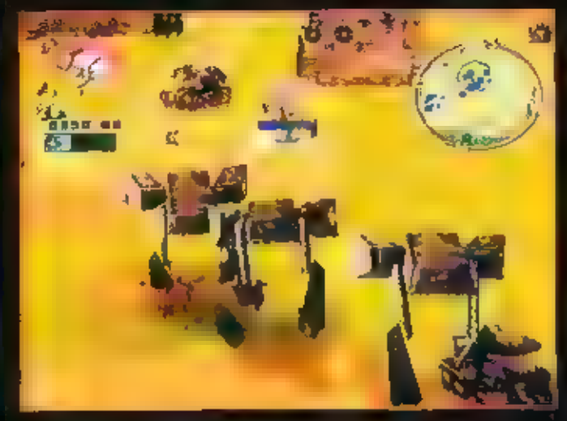
Single Player is fun but is a little too easy and can become boring after a while. To remedy the situation there is a comprehensive multiplayer mode that has a unique split screen display. Unlike most split screens that are split horizontally, in WarGames it is split diagonally to give each player maximum exposure of the map. Gamers have a choice of 3 different modes for multiplayer namely DeathMatch, Capture the Flare and Co-op. We here at NAG had the most fun with CTF where you have to steal a flare from the enemy's base and return it to your base. It might sound easy but try and get the flare back to your base when enemy units are coming at you with everything but the kitchen sink. DeathMatch uses the common gameplay of 2 players fighting it out for the most kills / frags while Co-op is the self-explanatory 2 player fighting side by side.

Graphically WarGames is superb. Electronic Arts used a 3D engine in combination with sprites to bring the battlefield to life. The 3D terrain and high quality textures used on units and objects give the game a very realistic look. Add to this the amazing special effects such as burning trees, explosions and collapsing buildings and you have one of the better PlayStation titles as far as visuals go.

Electronic Arts could have done a better job with the sound though. The weapon sounds are dull and artificial; the only elements saving WarGames from a disastrous sound score is the music and voice sequences which stand out above the everyday PlayStation game.

WarGames has its fair share of flaws but the game is still fun and entertaining to play. It introduces a new feel to the strategy genre by adding large doses of action to it and an entertaining multiplayer mode. Unfortunately the AI lacks intuitiveness making single player a play and forget option. It is however a good investment if your looking for a game with comprehensive multiplayer features.


Operation South Africa, it seems as if we live in the deserts, what's in that oil?


The three blind Mecha do plenty damage on this final mission

WarGames: Defcon 1 follows on the classic movie of the same name. WarGames stand out as one of the better games in the graphics department, but unfortunately the games has a weak AI and sub-standard sound. This makes for a weak single player game but fortunately the multiplayer mode has some innovative features.

Graphics	87
Sound	77
Gameplay	71
Multiplayer	73
Value	80
Overall	85

OVERALL RATING 79

www.mgminteractive.com

1 2 PLAYER

NA

+ Good Graphics
+ Innovative Multiplayer
- Short Viewing Range
- Weak AI
- Mediocre Sound

Rally Racing Simulation

Developer: Europress

Publisher: Europress

Supplier: Edutain Technologies
Tel: (011) 882-1735
RRP: R 399.00

International Site
www.europress.com.au

PlayStation

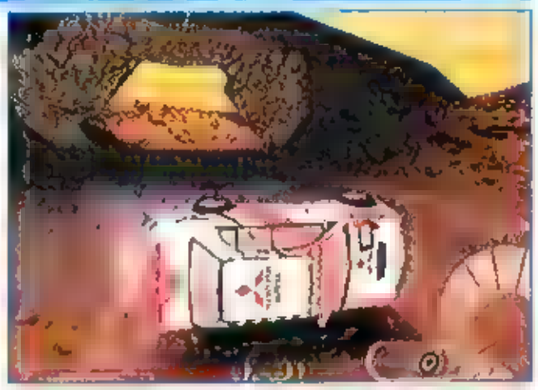
After sitting behind a 600Hp rally car Storm finds this contender to be more of a pussy cat than a true lion tamer

tommi mäkinen rally

After my review of Colin McRae Rally last month I was eager to get into Tommi Mäkinen Rally. Especially as it comes from the makers of Rally Championship which was one of the less successful title in this series of games. Gearing myself up for something special was a task one left for watching paint dry because what I was promised and what I experienced were two totally different things.

Tommi Mäkinen is currently the World Rally Champion and indicates what he considers to be the best of the genre and with the large selection of options it should compete. With 11 different Rally Cars that range from the Mitsubishi to the powerful Ford accurately modeled you are faced with a range of choices in setting up your vehicle for optimal performance.

You are offered five different racing modes that are made up of: Arcade, Championship, Time Trial, 2 Player and Challenge Tommi, the best of the crop falling the way of multiplayer that pits you against a friend in split screen mode. The controversial option of Challenge Tommi was one of the first I attempted and found Tommi to be more of a Sunday driver rather than a Rally Champion. My attitude changed once I entered my first Championship where I found Tommi to be almost unbeatable. Rather a different tune as to the previous challenge if a successful comparison can be made to Colin McRae Rally then it comes from the graphical element and are affected by way of 512x256 resolutions. These are slightly better considering that 320X200 is standard for the PlayStation. The fifteen different racing environments comprising of sixty-five race stages are well designed and realistically represented.



Storm tries to gain a strategic advantage by investigating a side on view

One option that impressed me and has not been attempted yet on PlayStation until now is the Track Editor. You are able to design and develop your own tracks that can be saved to your memory card (64 tracks to 1 memory slot) and used in conjunction with the Championship Editor.

Unfortunately we are now left with a title that falls dismally in the most important factor in the racing genre. Realism and Control falter and are terrible if compared to the new titles on the market. The vehicle physics are nowhere near playable and are frustratingly difficult because the control of the car is not up to standard. Even with support for the Dual Shock Controller I found the improvement to be slight and unconvincing. And this to the strange stage design that has you bumping into unseen objects that are there supposedly to keep you on track. And if your vehicle is to flip (which is fairly common), you are unrealistically flung on your side and instantly brought to a halt.

Another controversial flaw that may not worry certain rally lovers is the break from stage racing that normally has you racing against the clock. In TMR you race against your opponents and you race around a track rather than compete in a stage. This may be Europress's way of making the game more playable and addictive but actually goes against the way rally is actually competed.

TMR is not a bad racing game and is good fun to play but with titles such as Gran Turismo and Colin McRae Rally setting very high standards, it is up to the developers to maintain those levels.

REVIEWS UNDER FIRE

Wrestling Beat-Em Up

Developer: Activision

Publisher: Activision

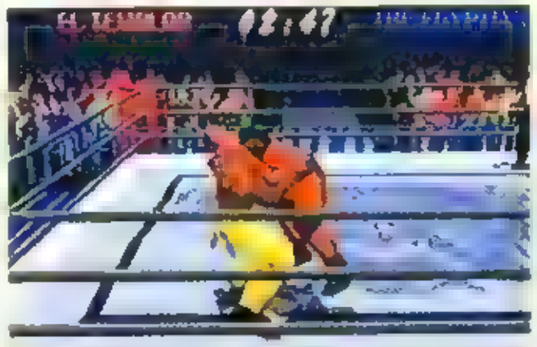
Supplier: Multimedia Warehouse
Tel: (011) 315-1000
RRP: R 479.00

International Site
www.activision.com

PlayStation

A lot of you who enjoy wrestling this game might be a little case. For those of you who do not know, here the moves I say Drop from their Top Rope, Jankenstomer and are not particularly bothered about this lack of knowledge. I recommend staying as far away from this game as you can possibly get. You are much more likely to get knocked out by an incredible feeling of boredom before any Scorpion Deathlock or Piledriver chose to inflict a certain amount of damage.

With twelve wrestlers to choose from you would be hard pushed to find many different moves, if any, at all. The wrestlers are all very similar in control so much so that the only real difference between them is their own set of moves. You have got your really standard line up of assorted strong men to choose from: Malibu Mike Swanson, Agent Orange, Aces 96, The Commandant etc. Half of the other off characters are in fact exactly the same, just with different coloured hair or shorts. There is no speed difference between them so do not think the small means fast and agile while big means slow and powerful. There are a few faces of new meat to choose from: PPW Tournament, PPW League, Championship, 12 Man Gauntlet and single match. You can also play a Four player Mode. All the modes are exactly the same in terms of actual fighting. In the 12 Man Gauntlet Mode you will not have a chance to recover from previous bouts. The computer selects an opponent at random and you are off again. The game has a fatigue/health system. Take too many knocks, particularly to certain limbs, and your health accelerates as your fatigue increases. This translates into your walking around looking as if you have just woken up from a deep sleep. Bouts are won through a combination of Pins and Submissions. The Submissions will win you victory only when your opponents have run out of hit points (the less hit points you have the least chance you have of taking a beating). Pins takes some practice to get it right. Like the other moves in the game it is very important to position yourself directly over your opponent in order to get the right move. The move that you execute depends upon where you are standing in relation to the other wrestler. The basic make up of the attacks is a Strike, a Strength Move and Submission Hold plus their



These stretch jocks come in handy in the most opportune times

Nick grapples with this wrestling sim and gets himself into a Scorpion Deathlock

are some nifty rebound moves you can get off by using the ropes and turnbuckle. When you administer a sound beating to another wrestler, not giving him the chance to counter-attack, you will find he suddenly gets a Rush. The Rush Mode allows the wrestler more strength than usual plus you will hear the crowd cheering him on. It is also possible for players to step out of the ring but there is a time limit and if this is broken you are disqualified. Otherwise there are other wrestling rules which have to be observed if you do not want to lose through disqualification.

The gameplay is very slow and not very responsive. If this is more real then OK but I think it is a useless use for a poor fighting engine. The level of the opponents AI is also suffering from neglect. It does not take long to figure out simple winning tactics against each wrestler. The difficult strategies are not particularly well paced and the overall feel of the combat seems awkward and heavy. Graphicwise the game is not even up to standard, hardly a step up beyond the 16-Bit days. The crowd, being the ringside, is poke and it is also pretty bad to take the wrestlers that seriously. Sound is no better with an MC who has a speech problem and crowd noises straight out of the PS library.

If you are really mad about your wrestling then go and check this out as there are some very good wrestling games to get to grips with. On the other hand if you are looking for a good fighting game look out for the likes of Bushido Blade 2, Tekken 3, Soul Blade or anything else for that matter as I do not think you could do any worse than Power Move Pro Wrestling.

MegaPak Volume 9

Publisher: Mega Media Corp.

Supplier: Datatec
Tel: (011) 233-1076

RRP: R 289.00

Games Included

- Destruction Derby 2
- Interstate 76
- Discworld II
- Pro Pinball Timeshock
- Civilization 2
- Jack Nicklaus 5
- IF-22
- Admiral Sea Battles

PC CD-ROM

I am usually suspicious of special deals and game packs as they are famous for bundling a whole bunch of games that I've never even heard of. Well I must say that I was pleasantly surprised with this collection of games that I [illegible] review. Not only were the games some of the best in their category when they were first released, but they also represent an excellent selection from the different game genres.

There are two driving games, Destruction Derby 2 and Interstate 76 - both classics and plenty of fun to play. Then there's a madcap adventure with Rincewind in Terry Pratchet's Discworld II. For those gamers that enjoy arcade styled play there's TimeShock, a pinball extravaganza which has some really great levels and is sure to keep you away from your work for hours at a time. Flight sim fanatics haven't been ignored and there's a cutting edge high tech F22 flight simulation for you to try your hand at. For all those stressed golfers out there, MEGAPAK 9 also includes Jack Nicklaus' 5, a really great golfing game with ten different golf courses. Lastly strategy gamers will probably be happy to hear that they have included Admiral Sea Battles where you get to control ships in the line in this challenging war game.

Of the eight titles my favourite has to be Sid Meier's Civilization II, a game I still play and one that is rated as the best simulation game ever. For those of you who are not familiar with this game Civilization II is a game where you need to build your fledgling civilization to a super nation, controlling nuclear weapons and space travel. You play the game on a randomly generated map and usually begin with a single settler that will build your first city. By researching new technologies and making the correct social advances you can lift your people out of the Stone Age into a stage of development where you control the world with electricity, fighter planes and advanced missiles. Civilization II requires a combination of military strategy and good [illegible] ment to be successful.

All in all MEGAPAK 9 is a really good buy and contains plenty of fun titles. Excellent as a gift or even to add these games to your collection.

MegaPak Volume 9

Publisher: Blizzard Enter

Supplier: Datatec
Tel: (011) 233-1076

RRP: R 299.00

Games Included

- Warcraft Orcs and Humans
- Warcraft 2 - Tides of Darkness
- Warcraft 2 Beyond the Dark Portal

PC CD-ROM

WarCraft II is probably the best real time strategy game ever released. WarCraft Battle Chest is a compilation set that includes the original WarCraft II Tides of Darkness, and the official expansion set Beyond the Dark Portal as well as WarCraft Orcs & Humans which was the first version of WarCraft to be released.

For those of you who are not familiar with the game, WarCraft is a medieval fantasy war game where you may choose to play either the humans (the good guys) or the Orcs (the baddies) in a battle for control over the lands of Azeroth. The game world is beautifully drawn and features many different settings ranging from the pleasant wooded countryside to sun blasted deserts. Battles are fought using a wide variety of military units such as archers, knights and even ballista, a sort of huge crossbow. Most games begin with you owning only a couple of peasants and maybe a foot soldier or two. To build up your army you will need to start mining for gold and harvesting wood which you will need to build up you village and start training soldiers. Resource management is an important part of the game and you will need to ensure that you have sufficient resources during battle otherwise you will quickly run out of troops. Peasants do all the building and mining but they are often exposed to attack by the enemy so you will need to protect your supply routes which can place a rather large drain on your military resources.

One of WarCraft's biggest appeals is its multiplayer support. WarCraft II allows you to play games with up to eight players over a LAN or the Internet.

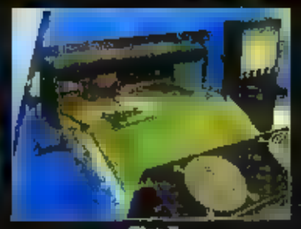
WarCraft II is a timeless classic that is a tremendous amount of fun. If you have never owned a copy or played the game the WarCraft Battle Chest is probably the best investment you could ever make in a computer game.

New Age Gaming Report

The SoundBlaster Live! production line at Creative Resource which operates 24 Hours a day and produces +- R12 Million Creative Lab products a month. We follow the stringent processes the SBLive! goes through before it is finally boxed and shipped.

Step 1

Step 2



Step 3

e have become spoilt over the last few years with 3D accelerated graphics, making gaming more visually exciting. Super computers and exploding special effects are becoming synonymous in the trade and we are reaching new heights never before seen in gaming. We always tend to look at what the graphical capabilities are before we judge game sound qualities, and even then we hardly consider the sound to be of similar importance. We expect the sound only to keep pace with the graphics and to entertain our musical interests until now.

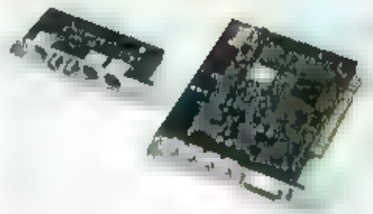
The Sound Blaster Live! from Creative offers such an advance that it will revolutionise the way we play games. Powered by the EMU10K1 chipset the most powerful sound chip available on the PC today, I can safely say that it provides a sound experience that has to be heard.

But what actually makes the sound so attractive that other cards don't offer? Most of todays PC's only have flat, dull sounding speakers that offer little in the way of realistic effects. Standing in a room with a rocket launcher should sound as echo sound effect of some sorts but due to the hardware and programming limitations it cannot be simulated. Effects like these will the only 3D positional audio which is fast rising in increasingly more popular to sound realised with two speakers.

This is where the SBLive! stands head and shoulders over its competitors. Its real time effects, multi channel speaker and environmental Audio extension support. What does all this mean? Well programmers can utilise the EAX API to directly influence sounds to simulate environments such as an echo in a hall. This is then easily processed by the EMU 10k1 chipset of the SBLive! and routed to a surround sound speaker system to give 3D positional audio. This effectively simulates realistic sounds in a 3D environment in real-time creating some of the best sound experiences have ever heard on PC.

What ever your taste in sound, whether you're in gaming or a music enthusiast, you will get distinct enhancements in the audio. Creative has worked hard on developing an all in one software bundle that not only gives ever-then game support, but will change the way you listen to legacy music on your PC. With a large range of preset environmental settings, you can use the intuitive Creative's SBLive interface to change effects as well.

But the question that hangs on every gamer's lips is is there support on the new Environmental Audio extension API with the game developers. The answer is an overwhelming yes. If the release list is anything to go by. Currently there are 35 titles that have officially signed up for EAX with major support coming



The SBLive! with the Digital I-O daughter board

Installation

After ripping the package to shreds, I was amazed at the size of the actual card. It is the size of my WELL and whether it could perform all those amazing things it said. Well, SBLive! stands up to the marketing demand. Comes in small packages.

The obvious difference comes to way of the PCI as it has the advantage of make sure sets, but a free PCI slot before the installation and initiate your installation process. The documentation's step by step instructions follows all the measures and is very user friendly for even the non computer buff. Windows 95/98 automatically recognises the new hardware and it's as simple as pointing out where to find the drivers on the driver disk provided.

As is the software, you'll be prompted for installing all the applications except for having enough hard drive space for everything. In a nutshell, the SBLive! installed like a dream.

Software Package

As usual with Creative the packaging holds a wealth of interesting software additions. Quite frankly, the packaging alone seemed to be even more exciting than the card.

For all the gaming fans who don't already have a copy of Unreal, you receive a special edition version with awesome EAX compatibility that truly changes the adrenaline levels of this action shooter.

In the music section Creative have used two of their own production. Cool Edit Restaurants you to learn and play the guitar on a PC and Creative Rhythmia Classics can play the keyboard on the PC with auto accompaniments. An interesting module called Mixman Studio that's version will keep aspiring DJs mixing music to their heart's content.

On the entertainment side, Creative Prodigy Panel uses the latest technologies to control with a voice microphone or a keyboard using voice recognition and text to speech.

Three applications are included for the audio and music production user. These consists of the ways of Creative Wave Studio basic editing and recording, Sound Forge XP a digital audio and editing with advanced features, Cakewalk Express Gold a basic digital audio multi-track recording compatible with SoundFonts. There are also 50 Soundfont libraries included with which composers and arrangers can utilise.

Finally, Creative has included a Play center that is a fully integrated multimedia player that replaces the standard one. It's compatible with all popular multimedia formats and users can apply extensions for Audio and Creative Multi Speaker Surround (CMSS) to media.

The PCWorks FourPointSurround speakers are highly recommended to take full advantage of the SBLive! Check out next months Hardware Hype Review

After that mouthful you can see that Creative have not spared on the software and can truly be given a pat on the back in being able to come up with such a wealth of entertaining applications.

Support

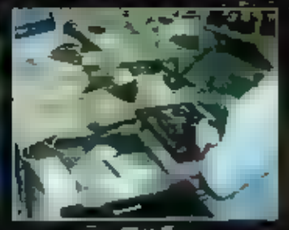
Creative has one of the strongest support infrastructures in the audio sector and is showing signs of improving daily. Even though the SBLive! has not yet been released in South Africa at the time of writing this article, there was an extensive driver update on Creative's South Africa website www.sblive.com.

If you don't happen to have access to the Internet you can then contact one of the authorised distributors. Diamond Computers support numbers during office hours are email them at the details listed at the end of this article. The support staff will be extremely knowledgeable and helpful and will gladly explain to them how and where if they have any queries in their shipment of tricks of the trade quest.

The SBLive! comes with a one year limited warranty and with a thorough support section in South Africa. Creative's the edge over competitors and offers piece of mind to the buying public.

R 1999 00 incl VAT
Creative Labs Africa
Super Diamond Computers
(011) 786-2116
www.sdc.co.za

Step 4



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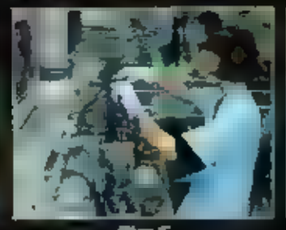


Step 6

Step 7

What is Environmental Audio and how does it work?

Environmental Audio™ by CREATIVE

Environmental Audio is a new sound standard developed by Creative that creates interactive audio experiences that rival real-world audio events on the PC. Environmental Audio goes beyond today's surround-sound and 3D positional audio to actually model an environment with effects that take into account room size, acoustic properties, reverb, echo and many other effects that create real-world experiences.

Using the power of the EMU10K1 audio processor in Sound Blaster Live!, environments are constructed using E-mu Environmental Modeling™ technology to render the reverberation, reflections as well as reflect distance cues to create an immersive acoustical environment. The Environmental Audio experience is scalable for use with headphones, two, four and more speakers.

Designed and developed at the joint Creative/E-mu Technology Centre, the EMU10K1 chip routes any audio source through multiple audio channels while adding effects in real-time. The EMU10K1 recreates and produces sound as they originate from different sources, as well as the acoustics – such as reverberation – associated with the size of a specific room, chamber, cave, tunnel, underwater channel, etc.

At a minimum, support cues for distance, room size and reverberation must be achieved for a "real" audio experience. More than just 3D positional audio is needed because the human ear does not just hear the origin of sounds, it also judges distance and receives location and volume from multiple audio cues.

By nature, the human ear is intolerant of human imperfections, the Environmental Audio Platform addresses this problem by introducing a system comprised of the following components:

Environmental Audio Hardware powered by the powerful 1,000+MIPS, 2 million transistor EMU10K1 audio processor chip, Sound Blaster Live! that provides high-quality audio fidelity with multiple digital audio input/output (I/O) capabilities.

Environmental Audio Software Technologies created by E-mu Systems, Inc., a subsidiary of Creative, that provides high end audio equipment to Hollywood studios, will change the way you perceive audio forever. They include E-mu Environmental Modeling™, which accurately positions audio objects in a 3D space by rendering audio reflections and Creative Multi Speaker Surround, which allows real-time panning and mixing of multiple sound sources using two or more speakers. These technologies will greatly enhance audio content from the past, the present and the future.

Environmental Audio Extensions (EAX) enable games and application developers to easily enhance their software with high quality Environmental Audio effects. EAX is designed to be a natural extension to Microsoft® DirectSound® 3D API and has received overwhelming support from hundreds of software developers.

Environmental Audio Speaker Systems work well with two speakers, but Environmental Audio will deliver it's full potential with multi-channel speaker systems such as the PCWorks® FourPointSurround™ speaker system. It offers five compact satellite speakers and a powered sub-woofer.

The PC gaming experience has entered a new age of sound with the unveiling of Creative Technology's new generation of audio technology – Environmental Audio. Creative has gone beyond the traditional hi-fi or 3D surround sound experience, and has created an environment that is truly immersive, real and 'live'. New Age Gaming spoke to Sim Wong Hoo, founder, chairman and CEO of Creative Labs, about his vision for developing the new audio platform, and the challenges associated with creating a 'live' sound experience. Janine Bührmann and Warren Steven reports from Creative HQ, Creative Resource, Singapore.

NAG: What was Creative's vision when creating Environmental Audio, and the Sound Blaster Live!?

(Mr Sim) About two years ago, I met with one of our chief scientist, Dave Rossum, and we were discussing how we could better audio. What could we do to improve and get better sound from a sound card that had already been through six generations of enhancements? We realised that what we needed to do was create a live, more experience for the end user, one which digitally produced music does not currently allow for. With our experience and capability in the market place we felt that Creative should be able to this. If you look at the entertainment industries – movies, music and gaming – they are all at such different stages in their development, yet they all have something in common: they all need something better than traditional 3D audio sound.

The movie industry is led by Hollywood and has created an almost real life experience in a theatre environment. But it is still a passive kind of entertainment with no control of the music or audio experience. The music industry is recorded in a dead room environment and is fixed with no allowance for interactivity with the music. The PC games industry is lagging behind but catching up. It is interactive but lacks tools, infrastructure, technology for audio realism, and creating the kind of experience that gamers require. We believe Creative has all the capabilities, experience and resources to tackle the whole industry. Fundamentally changing the audio experience on the PC. One of our challenges was to ensure that games, music or any audio application must sound like – not merely be hi-fi or 3D surround sound. The sound must be immersive, enveloping people into the environment. We didn't want to just improve the old SoundBlaster, which has lived a long life, but we needed to make a change. In how PC audio is produced and delivered. We needed to create a new audio platform.

NAG: How did you go about doing this?

(Mr Sim) We needed to have a significantly more powerful audio processing capability. We needed to create the most advanced algorithms for sound effects and acoustical rendering that controlled how objects were positioned in a real 3D environment. We needed the best multimedia and home theatre speakers, and rendering with correct acoustical properties.

Creative has developed environment audio extensions (EAX), which it hopes will fast become the standard. EAX is 'industry open' and will give support and flexibility to software developers so they can easily enhance titles with environmental audio effects. EAX is designed to be a natural extension to Microsoft DirectSound 3D API.

Creative's multi-speaker surround sound was developed out of its speaker company Cambridge. We wanted to deliver the full potential of environmental audio that couldn't be experienced with two speakers. Having said that however, environmental audio will still significantly improve the sound experience on two speakers.

We have introduced a new line of multi-channel speakers developed by Creative and SoundWorks – the PCWorks four point surround speaker developed as a companion for SoundBlaster Live and Desktop theatre 5.1, a companion to PC DVD.

NAG: So what powers the SB Live!

(Mr Sim) Creative has developed a powerful audio processing capability called EMU10K1. The EMU10K1 is a 1.000+ MIPS, 2 million transistor audio processor chip, and provides the highest possible audio fidelity with multiple digital audio input/output capabilities. We believe it is the most powerful PC audio processor ever, and has been derived from technologies used in professional studio equipment.

All these above technologies have been pulled into SoundBlaster Live to produce the industry's first audio board to support environmental audio.

Environmental Audio creates real-world multi-dimensional audio on the PC. It immerses you in sound so vivid, you experience games, music, and other existing audio applications rather than just hear them. Because the concept of environmental audio is so revolutionary there are few words good enough to describe it. You must experience it yourself!

NAG: Is there game developer support for environmental Audio?

(Mr Sim) We have had overwhelming support from all the major games software developers, including Activision, DreamWorks Interactive, Electronic Arts, Fox Interactive, GT Interactive, Sierra, and Virgin Interactive – who have already provided environmental audio extensions support for a number of games titles.

For the first time developers are seeing something so exciting it means they can create more exciting titles. Because environmental audio is so superior, developers can now put realism into a game, immersing the gamer into the thick of the action.

NEW AGE GAMING SOUTH AFRICA

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

CREATIVE

Mr Sim Wong Hoo

NAG: What are the components of the Environmental Audio platform?

(Mr Sim) There are four components to our platform: the software technology aspect based on EMU, the creation of environmental audio extensions, the multi-channel speakers and the hardware component. All these technologies enhance the audio content from the past, present and future. We dramatically improve the sound experience from past contents such as CD Music, VCD, Wave, MIDI, line in and Microphone in. In the present there are thousands of existing games and audio applications that can be enhanced with environmental audio. And in the future we have created environmental audio extensions for use in future games, which will forever alter the game experience.

Creative's EMU technology centre leverages off sound effects algorithms and acoustical rendering that was developed for the Hollywood movie industry. We are using EMU environment modeling for the accurate positioning of audio objects in a 3D environment.

New Age Gaming would like to thank CEO of Creative Labs Mr Sim Wong Hoo www.creat.com, General Manager of Creative Labs Africa Mr Nir Grodzian nir@creativelabs.co.za, Managing Director of Uverwire Public Relations Janine Bührmann janine@ucc.co.za for making this interview a reality.

Hyundai Monitors

gamers being the upgrade junkies of the computer industry are always looking for ways to improve their gaming experience, and likely some of them have started buying bigger monitors. There are very few gamers that can actually afford a 21" which still mainly find its place in the publishing business, but 17" are becoming more affordable and are becoming more frequent in the office place and the home.

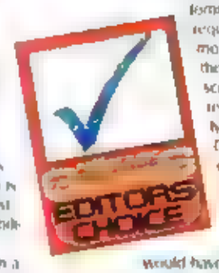
Unfortunately most people are not sure of what to look for in a monitor and usually end up buying the first one they find appealing. A decent monitor should have non-interlaced display modes to reduce flicker, support horizontal refresh rates of at least 75 Hz which offers a flicker free image. Come with a Digital On Screen display and have a dot pitch of .28mm or less for a good contrast. A good monitor should also emit low levels of radiation to prevent any adverse health effects.

Hyundai DeluxScan 7695 17 Inch Monitor

We recently received a Hyundai Electronics DeluxScan 7695 from CyberDyne Systems, who is the registered dealer in South Africa, and I must say that I am highly impressed with its affordable price and exceptional features.

This 17" monitor has a 16" display area with a maximum resolution of 1600x1200 at 75Hz and can actually compete with some high-end 21" monitors. The monitor also uses an advanced SVAR shadow mask to give ultra clarity and brightness while a .26mm dot pitch gives you a high degree of contrast. It also complies to the TCO 95 low radiation emission specifications.

The 7695 comes standard with an Digital On Screen display from where you can fine tune all your resolutions and get information about the current display mode. One button and a turn knob are at your disposal for changing all the settings necessary to customise the monitor to your requirements. One of the more interesting settings is the ability to save your screen settings for different resolutions. This is especially helpful if you play DirectX games that use different resolutions. After the initial set-up you will never have resize and move the display output again. I would have preferred 2 more small buttons in place of the knob, since the little turn knob used for changing values is awkward and can be uncomfortable to use.



The DeluxScan 7695 is a Plug and Play monitor so installation is a snap. Just plug the 15 Pin D-Sub into your video card and Windows should set all the necessary settings automatically. You might want to tweak your display card for the optimal settings, and for this a list of complete specifications is printed in the manual. Definitely something only advanced users should play with. Setting incorrect specs can damage the monitor and void your warranty.

Another important flaw too look out for when buying a monitor is convergence. Luckily the 7695 displayed not sign of it even at 1600x1200.

If you are in the market for a decent 17" I highly recommend that you take a look at the DeluxScan 7695. On work and play it might lacks some of the more advanced features found on 21" monitors but it won't cost you an arm and a leg. There is one drawback of using monitors of this quality however. The problem itself doesn't lie in the monitor itself, it lies with video Cards. To use a high quality monitor you need a decent card and not one of these $129.00 jobbies that come with a lot PCs nowadays, otherwise it's not will is justifying the money you have to spend on the monitor. You need at least a 4-MB card that can output the display at 1280x1024 using a 75 Hz or higher refresh rate.

R 2924.10 (RRP)
CyberDyne Systems
(011) 327-0237
www.cyberdyne.co.za

or those that just need a decent 15" solution there is always the DeluxScan 5870 also from Hyundai electronics which also comes with an exceptional 3 year warranty. It might not have all the features of the 17" but it still offers exceptional value.

This 5870 has a viewable area of 13.7" and a dot-pitch of .28mm which is standard today. Even with a .28mm dot pitch it offers a high degree of contrast.

The CRT has been treated to be non-glare, anti-static and anti-reflective which makes the monitor suitable for a number of environments. Even though it has a maximum resolution of 1280x1024 it does not support 75 Hz at that resolution, only 60 Hz. It does however support 1024x768 with a 85 Hz refresh rate which makes it an ideal solution for home computers and low end workstations that doesn't work with graphical applications like CAD design. Due to this and the fact that the modes are non-interlaced means that the image will be flicker free up to 1024x768. This doesn't impact the 5870 too much since 15" users rarely go above this resolution.

Hyundai DeluxScan 5870 15 Inch Monitor

Hyundai didn't disregard the fact of an OSD being a demanded feature for users and gave the 5870 its own. There are less options and configuration items than on the 17" but more than enough to satisfy users, all the necessary options are there for setting a clear picture. The 5870 have the type of controls that I prefer being 3 buttons instead of 1 button and a turn knob. This makes selection so much easier not to mention faster. One of the most useful features of the 5870 is the ability to save screen configurations automatically. This feature is rarely found on a 15" monitor and is usually only implemented on larger and more expensive monitors. This takes away the tedious task of resizing your viewing area every time you change to a different resolution.

As with the 17" the 15" has an uncomplicated process for installation and is identical to the installation of the 17" Hyundai above.

If you have a flickering 15" display or need a high quality 15" monitor take a look at the Hyundai DeluxScan 5870. It is reasonably priced and offers sound image quality.

Both of these quality monitors are only available from CyberDyne Systems who sell them wholesale direct to the public and offer full support for the warranty period. CyberDyne Systems is located in Gauteng but are also willing to courier the goods, using door to door service, to anywhere in South Africa for a small additional cost.

R 1282.50 (RRP)
CyberDyne Systems
(011) 327-0237
www.cyberdyne.co.za

Monitor Glossary

SVAR Shadow Mask

Dot Pitch

Cathode Ray Tube (CRT)

Non-Interlaced

Convergence

Saitek PCdash

It's not everyday that you see a totally unique peripheral for the PC. Saitek's PCdash makes games more fun by increasing the usability of games. It offers the PC Dash, a keyboard simplifier from Saitek, and games become easier and more enjoyable to play by offering a unique graphical user interface to simplify keyboard commands.

The controller consists of 35 sensor pads, 7 fire buttons, 3 modifier buttons, an 8-way directional pad, a 10-way macro overlay and a barcode scanner all neatly packed in a professional looking black plastic casing.

Installation of the PC Dash couldn't be easier with its pass-through keyboard connector. Simply plug the keyboard connector into your keyboard port and then plug your keyboard into the pass-through connector. That's it. No drivers, no software installation and no hassle.

After installation you are ready to use the PC Dash to play games or help you in everyday applications. The Dash works by inserting a printed sheet for a particular game by lifting the lid, and then placing the card over the 35 sensor pads. Close the lid, which protects your printed sheet via its see-through plastic cover, swipe the bar code scanner and you're already to play a game with the PC Dash. The whole procedure takes half a minute and is very uncomplicated so even newcomers to the PC can operate it.

For gamers playing games with a large variety of keyboard commands the PC Dash is heaven sent. Now you can move all the clumsy and complicated keyboard commands to the PC Dash and have them represented by an easy to identify graphical icon. This makes learning games quicker and enables you to play faster.

There are 10 game sheets included with the PC Dash but prospective owners will be pleased to know that a vast amount of games ship with their own cards as well. Saitek's aim is to have every major gaming release soon with a its own PC Dash card. Their goal is 12 million several cards. This plan has already been set in motion and new games like Actua Interceptor and Mech Commander also shipped with their own card and many more are promised. It follows:

So what if they ship new cards with new games, what about all the games released in the past and future games that won't ship with one? Don't despair. Saitek has a very extensive list of downloadable cards on their web site at www.saitek.com and should it not be there you can always design your own.

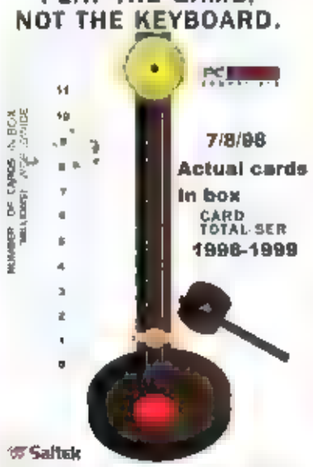
For this purpose Saitek included the PC Dash Command Centre that enables you to program the PC Dash which is a snap. The PC Dash offers full programmability and ease of use putting control back in the hands of the user. The 35 sensor pads combine with the 3 modifier buttons to give a total of 150 programmable functions, enough for any type of game. The only work that requires a little artistry is the design of the backdrop and fancy buttons. It's up to you to be artistic mood. There are always backgrounds graphics that can be downloaded from Saitek and customised to suit your own design.

Saitek's statement is that the PC Dash is so simple to use that you don't require a manual and we almost totally agree with them. There is a full introduction to the PC Dash included in the packaged CD-ROM just in case. There are also four demos on the CD for your enjoyment namely Tomb Raider 1 & 2, Tekken and Jet Fighter 3. Enough to keep any gamer busy for a while. But some of all products would have been a great addition.

Overall the PC Dash can be seen as filling a gap for a controller that displays visually recognisable controls to make gaming easier and more fun. Personally I found the PC Dash superb for all types of gaming. It's unfortunately a bit bulky to have a keyboard and a PC Dash on your desk at the same time, even more so if you are using a joystick or mouse in conjunction with it. It's just a move out keyboard totally out of the way and make sure that you won't need it when playing games. Is moving all the functions over to the PC Dash.

The PC Dash comes with a standard year warranty and is distributed by Virtual Media Systems who also offer support via their web site at www.vms.co.za. Should anyone experience any problems when purchasing one of these beauties. It is available at reputable computer retail stores and has suggested retail price of R550.00. A little more expensive than a game but well worth the money.

The PC Dash is definitely a peripheral gaming enthusiast should take a look at. It will change the way you use your keyboard and enhance your gaming experience. Play the game, don't learn the keyboard.



Saitek goals of reaching the magic 12 Million PCdash cards in boxes looks well on its way.

R 550 00 (RRP)
Virtual Media Systems
(011) 768-6080
www.cybertime.co.za

MULTIPLAYER MAYHEM

Ever since the first multiplayer game of the timeless classic Warcraft 2 Scott 42 years have been drawn towards the competitive nature of Blizzard Entertainment games. The debatable leaders in real-time strategy based to the masses and developed the space comparative of their previous best seller and introduced Starcraft. With one deft move Starcraft climbed to the top of the world charts and has held the number one spot for 13 weeks with no challenger in sight. Cries from all over were heard for a South African Starcraft competition and Electronic Arts Africa, ICON 98, PCI Electronics, 3-Com, Datatec, Gamecity.co.za and New Age Gaming made their wish come true.

On Saturday the 1st August 1998 at the Edenvale Community Centre the boards of potential champions lined the carpark as they made their way to the registration desk. As Ash commented before, only 128 lucky entries would be accepted and there would be some disappointed challengers leaving disgruntled. But to the surprise those that missed out on the magic number were more than happy to support and taunt the opposition.

The New Age Gaming team made up of Damage Clan members looked on as the big competition the SAS Clan sponsored by Electronic Art Africa, sharpened their claws. Surprisingly the majority of entries came from dedicated Starcrafters that had taken the passion for multiplayer gaming and timestamps it into a strategic [illegible] normally seen on Battlefield sessions. At high as the last of the [illegible] strategists filtered through and at [illegible] time closed in on the first round start. Strategists replied as their names were called signifying their acknowledgements of the machine allocation. Whispers were said as players moaned at the luckiness of the draw and the mood

New Age Gaming The Damage Clan
Andy (TrueBlue), Andy (Psyc), Uwe (Viper), Alex (Raven)

- Starcraft Competition Sponsors -

From everybody at New Age Gaming and the Starcraft public we would like say a big thank you to everybody who invested time and money into the Starcraft Competition especially PCI Computers who put up an amazing 32 PII Computers and without the competition would not have been possible.

PCI Computers - www.pci.co.za
Creative Labs - www.soundblaster.com
Electronic Arts Africa - www.ea.co.za
3COM/Datatec - www.datatec.co.za
Gamecity - www.gamecity.co.za

Chris Finalists Alex (Raven)

began to roll. At 10:30am the start was signalled as the first 32 Starcraft players hunted only as a short 300kbs net work could feel the paternal wrath of destruction like [illegible] their normally restrained senses. As news came in, [illegible] the levels of play in the South African multiplayer games were much more [illegible] than originally expected. In fact there was such a high standard that some of the more highly respected and feared players were discretely ousted. Andy Dale (Triple K A Tribution NAG) was one of the big NAG members to falter, being the Tripper ranked SA Raven up.

Bet to Not he explained that the pressures of circumstance and the high standards impressed him enough to concede that the gaming community was becoming [illegible] of strategy, the winner would have to be sharp, effective and clinical if he is to take home the crown, of that I have no doubt.

The rounds passed quickly and efficiently as the 4-player first rounds came to an end, more sad news came in as SAS Clan players such as The Shadow (SAS) also became victims of the high-rolling public. Crowds of spectators filled the gaming area to get a look at how computer games should be played. The second round began as quickly as the first and nightfall passed over us, tomorrow would be another day.

Bright and early well-rested gladiators of the screens arrived to take their place in the third round. This time individual tactics were called for as the games changed to the one-on-one platform. A surprising amount of Protoss players littered the one-on-one games, so much so that the Terran's did not make it past the third round. Games were completed quicker than expected and players had little turn around time to adjust to the new rounds, but those who [illegible] adapted if you winning.

After the grueling rounds the superior players stood tall, only four players left, all ready to take the crown of Starcraft Champion. The NAG players Alex a.k.a. Raven, now a member of the NAG gaming reviewing team, [illegible] Commander and Chris a.k.a. Vertigo (better known for his quick [illegible] stood between Riaan a.k.a. Animal and the relatively slick zerg player Chris, the others all play Protoss.

The semi-finals had the makings of a soap opera, the tension grew as strategies normally effective were run faces left by the adversary and survival tactics cut in. Another NAG member Vertigo and the agile named Animal Riaan) crashes at the second last hurdle, their pride still intact but disappointed nonetheless they eventually played out for 3rd and 4th place of which Animal came out tops with a strong strategic maneuver that has Vertigo nodding in acceptance.

On to the final match of the day, the winner would hold [illegible] the status of being the first Starcraft Champion in South Africa. If you take the scale [illegible] compared amount of players, Raven looked focused and deadly while Chris had grown confident with his Zerg load off of Mutalisks, Ultralisks and Zerglings. As the final started a stand-off ensued, the two mouse slingers had shown as much respect as they possibly could. Finally the battle began with the Zerg leading the attack and the Protoss showing its ability to stand fast. A pendulum of attacks waved through until the Zerg finally bowed to the powers of the Protoss.

Raven [NAG] was victorious.

Results of the ICON 98 Starcraft Competition

Single Player

1st Alex (aka Raven) New Age Gaming/Damage Clan (Protoss)
2nd Chris (Zerg)
3rd Riaan (aka Animal) (Protoss)
4th Chris (aka Vertigo) New Age Gaming/Damage Clan (Protoss)

Team Play

1st Electronic Arts South African Squadron Clan
2nd New Age Gaming The Damage Clan

Electronic Hideaways

With the network gaming community in South Africa growing everyday, we are continually looking for meeting places that house the intellectual knowledge of our evolutionary hobby. We wish to be able to convey our quest for knowledge and virtual blood at venues that offer to fulfil our demanding needs. It has been some time since an Internet Cafe has created hype around its gaming community, but Cyberjack Internet Cafe at Kempton City in Johannesburg is doing just that.

If you haven't heard of the Quake team Clanfusion by now, you surely will if the results of the latest contests are anything to go by. Clan Leader and head honcho of Clanfusion 'Wiblitz' is currently rated No. 1 on the Global Quake2 Server and is showing signs of becoming serious competition to the current Quake2 Champion 'Viper' from Damage Clan. With this in mind it seems that Cyberjack Internet Cafe is the place to be if you wish to hob knob with the elite of the Quakedom.

CYBERJACK INTERNET CAFE

This quaint little shop has a strong gaming vibe and knowledgeable staff that not only help you get into your game of choice, but have in-depth knowledge of the product. The setup is small yet comfortable with seven Pentium PC's ready to run everything from games to DTP applications. An Internal Coffee Shop is on hand to top you up with high quality coffee and a fresh range of eats for those late night sessions. If you have any Internet needs, whether it be web page hosting or dial access at affordable rates, Cyberjack offers the full range of services.

[illegible] you want than the specials that Cyberjack offer will have you saving many of those hard earned Rands. An interesting club membership scheme is in place and is an excellent option if you are a frequent virtual gamer.

From the first glances at Cyberjack from the outside not many gamers would find it inspiring, but the true atmosphere is tightly sealed inside. There is nothing better than being in the middle of a Quake fraglest filled with sounds of weapons, destruction and good clean addictive fun. From the NAG team we say to the Cyberjack Internet Cafe 'keep up the good work and see you on the servers'.

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THE KEMPTON PARK CONNECTION

PlayStation is enjoying revivals across the entire console spectrum. Hardware is moving rapidly and games are reaching new heights in sales figures. But through this all we are still told to deal with corporate companies whose main objectives are to ravage through titles with little or no knowledge of the products they are selling. Hopefully times are a changing and with the stronger competition coming from dedicated gaming stores such as Shop 99 at Kempton Park in Johannesburg, we will start to see the levels of salesmanship rising.

Tucked away in the hustle and bustle of this busy shopping centre, Shop 99 slowly but surely are trying to redefine good service and good value for money. Being pitted against the super powers of retail gaming is no easy task but Philip and his team still manage to offer one of the best all-round service [illegible] in South Africa. Affordable pricing and a range of buying options will impress you as you set out on your quest to spend as little money possible on the best products available. Not many PlayStation shops offer the ability to come in and spend an hour or two trying out your favourite game for a minimal fee. If you have a game in mind that you wish to purchase, you are able to test the title for a few minutes free of charge. This helps with a peace of mind purchasing process that very few stores offer. If you are not in the market to purchase then the rental option is available to subdue your craving for more games.

If you are looking for an intensive range of PlayStation peripherals, look no further than Shop 99. They cater for all gaming genre's and stock the latest (and greatest; Ed) gaming magazines as well. You may ask yourself the question 'how do I now get to Kempton City?' Never fear, with Shop 99's Mail Order you are able to secure a copy of your favourite games timeously and it will be delivered to your doorstep.

SHOP 99

With the support of retailers such as Shop 99 we are sure to see the gaming industry reaching new heights and more affordable pricing. I have always said competition is good for any industry and gaming is one that certainly needs it. If you are in the market for a hot title, give Shop 99 a call and broaden your buying options.

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	Day1	Day 2	Day 3	per add day
[illegible]	R60	[illegible]	R90	R30
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3 titles	R15	[illegible]	R55	R20

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CLUELESS

Tips, Cheats and Tactics

We decided after all the mail for more cheats to start bumping up the Cheats section. We start the overhaul at 3 pages for PC and PlayStation and hope to increase this steadily.

If you have any PlayStation or PC cheats please send them to us at cheats@nag.co.za. This will help us overcome the shortage

PLAYSTATION CHEATS

Point Blank

Extra Points:
In the Octopus stage, you can shoot the crab for some bonus hit points.
In any of the stuffed toy stages, you can repeatedly shoot the glass that shows your target and get many bonus hit points.
In most of the criminal stages, you can shoot out the windows of cars or buildings and get many extra hit points. If you shoot out a window when a criminal pops up, you can also get more than 100% accuracy and get more points.
In scene of the protecting Dr. Don and Dr. Dan stages, you can shoot them and get hits for shooting them.
Map:
In quest mode, start a new game and go down until you see a raft. Run over it to get the map.
Power Shotgun and Power Machine Gun:
The Power Shotgun and Power Machine Gun in Quest Mode are found in the last level. You go to the second town (The town without the inn) and head south along the eastern edge of trees. About half way between that town and the small hut, there will be a secret entrance into the forest. You must navigate through the forest maze and get into the large pond on the other side. Once you get there, head just north of the uppermost ducks in the pond and near the center. Search around and you should find the Power Shotgun. Then, travel south through the pond and you should find the Power Machine Gun. These two items are just the Shotgun and Machine Gun that can be used an infinite number of times.
NOTE: To use the Power Shotgun, you must have a dexterity of at least 40. To use the Power Machine Gun, you must have a dexterity of at least 60.

Wargames: DEFCON 1

NORAD Missions:

Mission 2 -	OXO OXX OXO
Mission 3 -	XXO XXX XOO
Mission 4 -	OSX OOT OXS
Mission 5 -	TXO OXX STO
Mission 6 -	SOO SOX XOX
Mission 7 -	SXX XOS OXS
Mission 8 -	OOX SST SSO
Mission 9 -	SSO TOT XTT
Mission 10 -	XTO SOO OXS
Mission 11 -	OST XST TTS
Mission 12 -	TSO XTO OXS
Mission 13 -	SST STS TXT
Mission 14 -	XXO TXT SXS
Mission 15 -	OSO XSX TOX

W.O.P.R. Missions

Mission 2 -	OXO OXO XXO
Mission 3 -	STX TXO SXT
Mission 4 -	XTO XXO OOT
Mission 5 -	OOS SOX TXX
Mission 6 -	XOX TTS OXT
Mission 7 -	TTX XSS XXO
Mission 8 -	SXO TXX SOT
Mission 9 -	SOT TXO XXO
Mission 10 -	XOS TOX SXT
Mission 11 -	TOX TST SOO
Mission 12 -	XOT XSO XSO
Mission 13 -	XOS SXX OXO
Mission 14 -	OTO OTS XTS
Mission 15 -	TST OXO OOS

The Crow: City of Angels

Level Code

Pier:	T,X,T,T,O,S,X,O
Boat:	X,X,X,X,T,S,X,O
Tomb:	TOTOSTTOXO
Grave:	X,T,X,T,S,X,X,T,S,O
Church:	T,T,T,T,O,S,T,S,S,O
Day o' Dead:	X,T,X,T,S,O,O,X,S,O
Club:	T,O,T,O,O,T,X,O,S,O
Tower:	X,X,O,X,S,S,X,T,O
Borderland:	T,X,X,X,O,S,T,S
Finale:	X,X,X,O,S,S,X,X,T,O

TRICKS
Trick 1: Stick figure action!
At the main menu highlight the continue option, enter this password: T, T, X, S, O, O, S, X, T, T
Trick 2: Stretches the necks of the characters!
At the main menu highlight the continue option, and enter this password: X, O, T, O, S, S, T, O, X, O
Trick 3: Take a look at all of the cinemas.
At the main menu, highlight the continue option, and enter this password: T, T, O, O, O, O, O, O, T, T
Trick 4: Makes data appear onscreen.
At the main menu highlight the continue option, enter this password: S,X,S,O,T,T,O,S,X,S

Micro Machines V3

Double Speed = S X C S T X X X X
Bounce Mode (Jump) = S Right Right Down Up Down Left Down Down
Debug Mode = S Up Down Down S C C T X
Use in debug mode:
Sel + X = Quit and reset time
Sel + L1 or L2 or R1 or R2 =
Zooming functions
Sel + Up or Down or Left or Right =
Rotate functions
X + S + O + T = Blow up cars
For all the tracks enter your name as GIMMEALL

Mortal kombat 4

Alternate Costumes:
Each character's second outfit is selected by rotating the select screen pictures a few times. Twice for all characters except Sonya, Tanya who requires three rotations.
Cheat Menu:
At the Options menu, go to the Vs Screen Enabled option and then hold BL+RN for about 10 seconds, the cheat menu will reveal itself.
New Character Moves:
Goro:
Fireball - F, B HP Stomp - F,F,B HK
Lung Kick - B,B HK Two Hand Swipe - F,F HP
Noob Saibot:
Fireball: D,F, LP
Play as Goro:
Select the Hidden button on the bottom of the select screen, move up 3, and over 1 (to Shinnok's icon) then press RN+BL together.
Play as Meat:
In order to play as the character MEAT you must go to "GROUP MODE" which can only be played in a two player mode. Play every character in the game (16 in all) and make sure you win every time. After you play and win with the final character you can pick anyone, your character will then be MEAT. He will have all the moves of the character you selected but he will look ALOT different!
Play as Noob Saibot:
Select the Hidden button on the bottom of the select screen, move up 2, and over 1 (to Reiko's icon) then press RN+BL together.

Blast Radius

All ships powered up
Press **Right,L1, Up (2), Down, Right, R2, L2, R2, Down, Up, Down** at the main menu. The sound of an explosion will confirm correct code entry. Select any ship, begin game play, then quit. All four ships will now be powered-up and Sector 5 will be available for game play.
Wraith ship:- Enable the "All ships powered up" code. Then, press **Left, Right, L1, Left, Right, L1, R2, R2, L2, Left, Right, Up** at the main menu. The sound of an explosion will confirm correct code entry. Select any ship, begin game play, then quit. The Wraith ship and Sector 8 will be available for game play.
Alternate planets:- Press **Down, Up, L1, Right, L1, Up, Right, Select, Right, R2, L1, L2** at the main menu. The sound of an explosion will confirm correct code entry. Faces of the development team will appear in the place of the planets in the first four levels. The next four levels will have other objects replacing the planets. Note: This code may not be enabled with the "All ships powered up" or "Wraith ship" code.
Bonus level:- Press **L1, Left, L2, Down, Select, Left, Down, R2 (3)**, Select, Up at the main menu. The sound of an explosion will confirm correct code entry. Four bonus missions that feature World War II aircraft and other hidden targets will be accessible. Note: This code may not be enabled with the "All ships powered up" or "Wraith ship" code.

PLAYSTATION CHEATS

Circuit Breakers

Night racing
Hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 while selecting a track until headlights appear in front of the car. A new symbol will appear on the track to confirm correct code entry.
Track select
Pause game play in single player mode. Enter the "Sound" option, highlight the "FX Volume" selection, and press L1 + L2.

Frenzy

Cheat mode
Enter **PICKLE** as a password and ignore the incorrect password message. Press Triangle to return to the main menu. Select the "Cheat menu" option to access a level select feature.

Ghost in the Shell

Note: This game is also titled Koukaku Kidoutai.
All mission and training FMV sequences:
Quickly press **R2, R1, Square(2), Up, Down, Square(2), R2(2)** at the main menu. A sound will confirm correct code entry.
Hidden Motoko Kusanagi picture:
Finish all missions without continuing to view a bonus picture after the ending credits.

Time Commando

Three continues:
Press Start during game play to pause the game. Highlight the "Sound FX" option on the menu. Press Triangle, Square, Circle, X, Triangle, Circle, Square, X, Triangle, Square, Triangle. A sound will confirm correct code entry.
Full life:
Press X, Triangle(2), Circle, X, Triangle(2),Circle, Square(2), X. A sound will confirm correct code entry. A sound will confirm correct code entry.
Weaken the virus
Press Triangle(2), Square, Circle, X, Triangle, Circle, Square(3), X. A sound will confirm correct code entry. The red bar at the top of the screen should shorten, allowing more time to explore the game for hidden bonuses and rooms.
Jump to the next stage:
Press X, Square, X, Triangle, Circle, Square, X, Circle, X, Triangle(2). A sound will confirm correct code entry.
Jump to the next world:
Press Circle, X, Triangle, Circle, Square, Circle, X, Square, Triangle, Circle, Square. A sound will confirm correct code entry.
Maximum energy bar size:
Press Square, Circle(2), Triangle, X(2), Circle, Square(2), Triangle, Square. A sound will confirm correct code entry.

Tommi Makinen Rally

Drive a bus
Enter STRANGE as a name then select the "Cheats" option on the main menu.
Drive a Peugeot
Enter PEUGEOT as a name then select the "Cheats" option on the main menu.
Mirror courses
Enter MIRROR as a name then select the "Cheats" option on the main menu.
More money
Enter _MONEY_ as a name, where "_" indicates a space. Then, select the **"Cheats" option on the main menu.**
Dual Shock controller always vibrates
Enter THRILLS as a name then select the "Cheats" option on the main menu.
Rally Jaunes mode
Enter FFSA as a name then select the "Cheats" option on the main menu.

Raystorm

Extra credits (Japanese version):
Repeatedly tap Select at the title screen to set the total credits to nine.
Free play mode:
Hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 and press Start when the phrase "Press Start" appears at the opening screen. While still holding **L1 + L2 + R1 + R2** press Up(7), Down, Up(4), Start. The phrase "Limiter released" will be spoken to confirm correct code entry. Enter the configuration screen and turn off the credit limit to enable free play mode. Alternatively, play the game a total of two hundred times.
Level select:
Successfully complete the combat mode game under arcade mode.

Kula World

Bonus levels:
Successfully complete all 150 regular levels, then select "1 Player" from the main menu. Select "The Final" option that appears to play the bonus levels.

PC CHEATS

Carmaggedon 2 Demo

If you want to play as any car in the demo (excluding the truck), then all you have to do is change one line in the **GENERAL.TXT** (in the data directory), which reads **EAGLE3.TXT** (it's right after 'Cars to use as defaults.') to anything you want. The names of the cars you can use are found in the data/cars dir.
Note: any try by me to change the car to the truck (using VOLVO.TXT) caused the demo to lock up at the title screen.

Commando's

Type **"1982GONZO"** during the game. (There is no zero in this cheat code). If that doesn't work, try "GONZO1982" instead.
Now, you have the following options:
SHIFT+V: Trace user.
SHIFT+X: Tele-transport. (Place the selected commandos under your mouse cursor)
CTRL+I: You are invincible.
CTRL+SHIFT+N: Finish the mission.

Command & Conquer:Red Alert

View credits:
Click on the Westwood logo at the title screen.
Giant ant missions (Counterstrike mission disc): Hold [Left Shift], then use the Left Mouse Button to select the round speaker on the title screen.
Tesla tanks (Counterstrike mission disc): Begin a game in skirmish or multiplayer mode. Select to be France and achieve a tech level of 7 or greater. Hold [Shift] and click in the radar jammer icon.
Free troops (Counterstrike and The Aftermath mission discs):
Build a missile silo and wait until a missile is ready to be launched. Sell the silo and immediately launch the missile. When timed correctly, the sale will be aborted and men will exit the silo.

X-Com Interceptor

Press **control + e** first and hear the low double beep before typing codes in:

battlecheat -	enable in-flight cheats
cantiouchthis -	invincibility
fillarup -	unlimited flight range
knowitall -	all research is yours
quickbase -	finishes all bases currently under construction
payday -	money

Dark Reign

In the game menu press **SS ADN** then type:

darkpower	- max. power
darkinv	- invulnerability
dark20000	- money value 20000

When playing the Freedom Guard the skirmish tanks always seem so fragile compared to the enemies plasma tanks. Well now you can give your skirmish tanks the same characteristics as the plasma tanks. There is a file called 'units.txt' in ..\dark reign\dark\defdxt dir.
You can edit this file, search for the Freedom Guard tank settings. Look for the 'Setstrength' entry and set your units strength to around 500. There is another field which sets the price and build time set this to say '50 1'. This will give you cheap tough tanks for around 50 credits and they will be built really quickly.
This works for all missions up to the 6th one. This is because there is a dedicated dir and units.txt file for this scenario, which you have to also edit in the same way.

PC CHEATS

Multiple Codes sent in by readers

Thank you to all the readers who sent in cheat codes. Unfortunately NAG cannot test all the codes, if some don't work for whatever reason please take it out on your garden furniture.

COLONY WARS

Password Cheats:
TRANQUILLEX - Weapons never overheats
MEMO' X33RTY - Infinite secondary Weapons
COMMANDER'JEFFER - Access to all missions, levels, acts and movies
HESTAS'RETORT - Invincibility
ALL'CHEATS'OFF - Turn all cheats off

MOTO RACER

Enter at name screen:
CDNALSI - All tracks enabled
CTEKCOP - Rocket bikes
CESREVER - Reverses all the courses.

SCREAMER 2

Go to the options menu and enter:
MRTRK - Accesses all tracks
CHMPA - Champions courses
TACARTBCARTCCARTDCAR - Access all cars

C&C- RED ALERT

To start a secret game involving giant ants (it came from Red Alert) hold the SHIFT KEY and click with the MOUSE on the round icon in the top right corner of the screen.

TOMB RAIDER 2

All codes must be entered while in game.
Level Skip: Step Left, Step Right, Step Left, Step Back, Step Forward, Turn Around three times and then do a Forward Jump and immediately press the Roll button to get the level and cinema.
All Weapons: Step Left, Step Right, Step Left, Step Back, Step Forward, Turn Around three times and then do a Backward Jump and immediately press the Roll button to get all weapons and plenty of ammo and items in your inventory.

TOTAL DRIVIN

At main menu screen press R1 to the tune of "Doe, a deer, a female deer". You'll now have access to SWITZELAND LEVEL 1 to 6.

FINAL FANTASY 7

Obtaining Cloud's level 4 LIMIT BREAK OMNISLASH- go to the Gold Saucer, to the Battle Arena and fight until you have at least 32000 battle points. These can be exchanged at the BATTLE ARENA for the OMNISLASH LIMIT BREAK.

PANZER GENERAL 2

Unlimited prestige points:
Clear a city of enemy units and place one of your units within that city. Cancel the moving your units into the city to keep the prestige points earned. Repeat this procedure to gain an unlimited amount of prestige points. Note: This will only occur if the difficulty is over 100%.

MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR '98

Slew mode:
Press Y in flight or before take-off. Then, press [F4] to increase altitude, [F3] to decrease altitude, [F2] to move forward, and [F1] to stop. The cursor keys may also be used to move the aircraft. Press Y to resume normal flight.

Monster Truck Madness

Bonus track:
Reach the fourth checkpoint on the Sidewinder Canyon track. Pass the bridge and quickly turn right when passing through the barricades on the right side. Drive along the dirt road and stop after the first bridge. Turn right to reach another bridge and drive until it ends. A checkpoint labeled "Pit" will appear. Enter that checkpoint to enable the bonus track.
Hockey game:
Set the weather to "Snow" and begin game play on the Breakneck Ridge track. A puck will appear in the icy area of the track.
Giant tire:
Drive on Breakneck Ridge track with clear weather. Dive into one of the lakes and ponds and set your view to see underwater. A giant tire should be sunk on the bottom.
Drive-In theater:
Drive on the Scrapyard Run track and drive until reaching a set of railroad tracks. Turn left at the tracks and follow them until the drive-in movie theater appears on the right.

Wargames

These codes can be accessed in single player mode by hitting 't' and typing them or by hitting one of the F1....F4 keys.
Single Player
eyeofgod - allows extra level of zoom on lower level machines
saladtossed -choose any level(you will have to go to the load screen after and do that ctrl h/w thing)
twobyfour -builds units(ex: twobyfour dragoon)
hermes -speeds up building of units
donkeys -anything that shoots a missile(wopr missile silo/wopr hunter, shoots jeeps instead of missiles)
morningafter -removes fog of war
gimmiegimmie -allows you to build everything, even without command center
unclejohn -god mode
chaching -adds 10,000 to cash total every time it is entered
mrmuscle -upgrades player's armor
bigcity -downgrades enemy armor
coffee -upgrades player's speed
beer -downgrades enemy speed
shaft -upgrade player's firepower
shank -downgrade enemy's firepower
Multiplayer:
eyeofgod, morningafter, and saladtossed.

World Cup 98

Due to popular demand and with the correct instructions this time
Cheat mode: Change a player name to match one of the following names, then press [Enter] to activate that single cheat option on the cheat menu. You may restore the name to it's original entry after all codes are entered. Then, press [Scroll Lock] at the main menu to display the cheat menu with the activate cheat options.
Effect Code:

1982 classic match	Zico
1982, 1974, 1970, 1966 classic matches	Hurst
Flaming ball	Kenny
Big heads	Gabo
Skeleton players	Kyle
Take a dive	Cartman
Hot potato mode	Gonzo
Crazy ball mode	Mr Hat
Silly moves	Powder
Alien mode	Neila

THE END!

Another month, another issue. This month was disappointing on the gaming side with most of the titles only receiving average scores. If it wasn't for MechCommander and Heart Of Darkness everyone in the office would have been bored to death, I think most of us finished Heart Of Darkness twice and I finished it once on the Editors machine with his awesome Sound Blaster Live! setup. (ssssshhhhh don't tell him).

On the opposite side of the coin all of the hardware we received were of outstanding quality and received exceptional ratings. Next month we will be taking a look at some new Diamond Multimedia products, one of which will be the Homerun Network. This innovative networking system uses radio signals to transmit data. No network cables, no hub, no fuss.

Looking ahead in my crystal ball, which I now have called GameVision 1998, I foresee a better gaming future than this month. It seems that we will be receiving some quality titles in the form of Tekken 3, Tiger Woods Golf, Quest for Glory V, SWAT 2 and Baldurs Gate.

Tekken 3 from Namco continues the highly successful series of beat-em-ups. The PlayStation version will feature characters never before seen, even in the arcade version, as well as graphical improvements over the last release, and it seems that NAMCO might deliver on their promise from the screenshots we have seen.

SWAT 2 from Sierra promises to put gamers in control of a SWAT team in various real life tactical situations, everything from Bank Robbers to Hijackers can be encountered in this sequel. Unlike its predecessor, the new game will use an Isometric view from where your SWAT members can be controlled instead of the first person view.

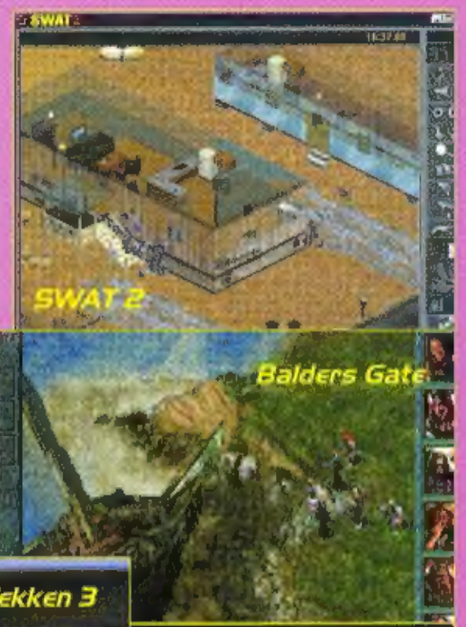
It has been a very long time since Quest for Glory fans have seen an addition to the fantasy adventure series. Sierra is finally releasing Quest for Glory 5 that has been in development for some time now. The game will feature 3D graphics as well as new weapons spells and characters. The big question that I would like to know is if I can import my character from the previous version.

Baldurs Gate from Black Isle / Interplay is probably the most anticipated and hyped about RPG game of the year. If Black Isle deliver on most of the promised features for this game 1998 might turn out to an evolutionary year for this genre. The most talked about feature is the ability for six players to play in a multiplayer game. Whenever one player wants to leave the game, the computer AI will take over his character and continue with the rest of the players. Should that person decide to return he could then take control of his character again. Kinda like AD&D without the fuss.

Our Editor will be disappearing for a week of two with the imminent release of Tiger Woods 99 from Electronic Arts. Currently ranked the top player in the world, Tiger Woods has finally decided to endorse a golfing game. This golf sim features dynamic redraws for quick 30-minute rounds and has some of the most detailed graphics ever seen in this genre. Whether it lives up to the expectations of our local golfing guru remains to be seen.

Thans again for all the constructive criticism that you have sent us. We always listen to our readers and will try to implement any suggestions should it be in the best interest of our magazine or the gaming community. As always we will be looking forward to receiving letters from everyone out there and we hope you enjoyed this issue.

Till next month, keep frogger, kicks butt, stamping, spelunking and playing games. Cheers!



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